

Better Homes & Gardens. remodel & REFRESH™

IDEAS
FOR
EVERY
ROOM

MAKE A PLACE YOUR OWN

FROM EASY UPDATES
TO MAJOR OVERHAULS

SMALL-SPACE
SOLUTIONS

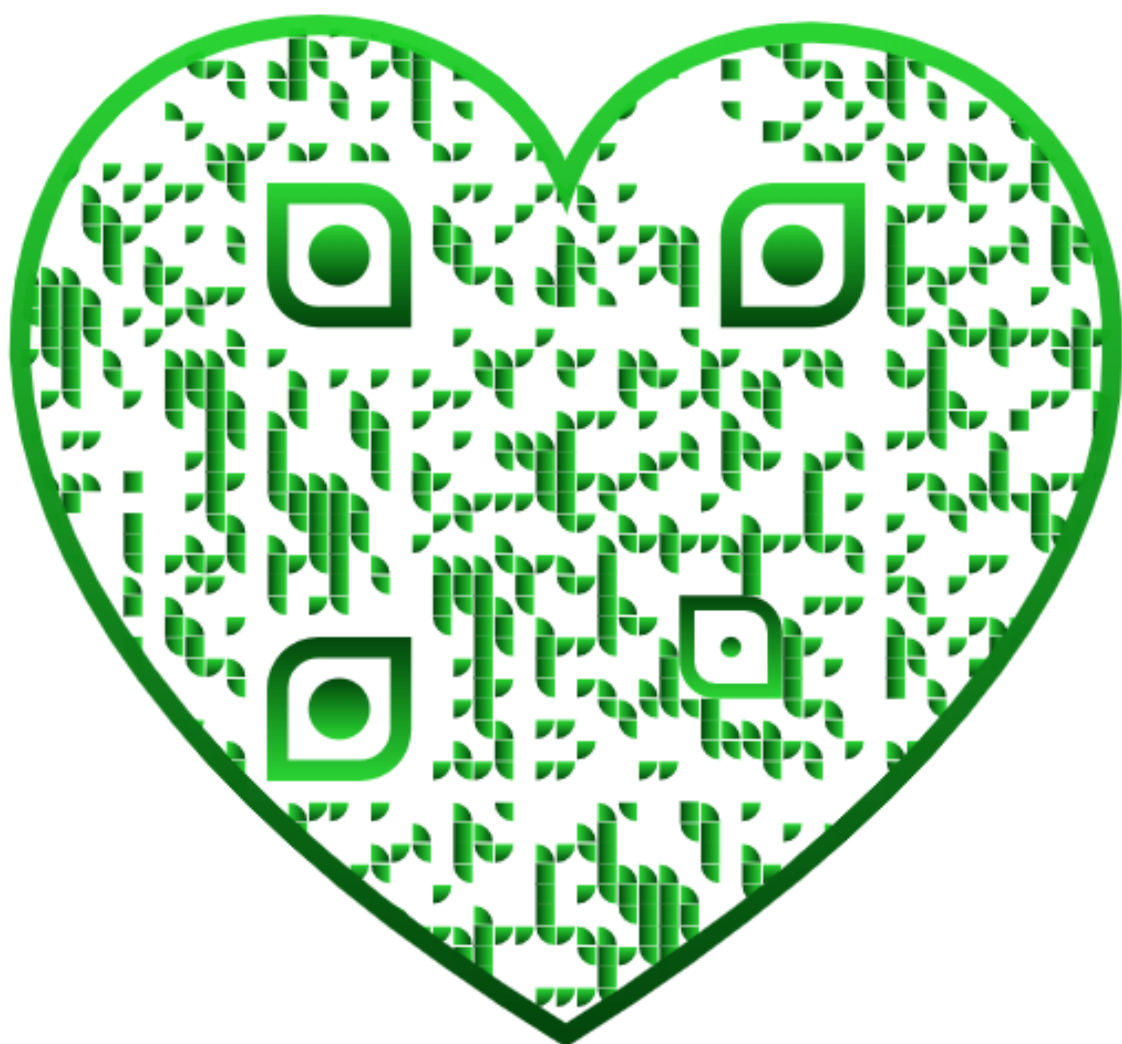
BUDGET-FRIENDLY
MAKEOVERS

WEEKEND
PROJECTS

BEFORE
PHOTOS OF
EVERY HOME!

2025







minted. + BRIDES

VERONA SUNSET

WEDDING COLOR *of* THE YEAR

Sparked by runway fashion, the rise of the Italian aperitivo, and the romantic backdrop for Romeo and Juliet, this color choice from Minted and the editorial experts at BRIDES® is setting wedding celebrations aglow.

[minted.com/brides](https://www.minted.com/brides)

Menu and Place Card: **Racquet** by Megan Davis.

TABLE *of* CONTENTS

READY TO START YOUR NEXT HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT?
DISCOVER RENOVATION IDEAS BOTH BIG AND SMALL FROM
HOMEOWNERS WHO MADE THEIR HOUSES SHINE.



22



40



50

04 HOME IMPROVEMENT REALITY CHECK

Is it actually worth it to renovate your kitchen? Or refinish wood floors? Or put in a pool? Real estate agents share which projects will give you the most return on your investment.

08 CURBSIDE CHARM

Five homeowners honored their house's style by highlighting its front yard, porch, and entry.

18 51 WAYS TO LOVE THE HOME YOU HAVE

Try these easy tweaks and upgrades to make any space look its best with minimal effort—whether you're selling or staying.

22 RENT THIS WAY

It takes creativity, patience, and a solid plan to turn a rental into a home—just ask Keyanna Bowen, who worked with her landlord to do just that.

30 BOLD VISION

Interior designer Angela Belt uses lively patterns, meaningful decor, and her personal touch to make her family's home feel like a sanctuary.

38 5 KITCHEN RENOVATIONS

Find inspiration to upgrade your cooking space with these stylish yet budget-friendly ideas.

40 HOMECOMING REIMAGINED

To honor the past and present, this couple blended modern furnishings and design choices with their home's traditional architecture.

48 5 LIVING ROOM REVAMPS

An upgraded fireplace, playful color palettes, and DIY built-ins led five homeowners to create their dream hangout space.

50 REALIZED POTENTIAL

What started as a just-for-kicks walk-through became a journey of rediscovery for these homeowners, whose renovated 1930s house is filled with heart, character, and a lot of sweat equity.

60 5 BEDROOM REDOS

Whether you want a calm retreat, bold design, or something in between, consider these style solutions to curate a space that's fully you.

62 REIMAGINED RETREAT

By focusing on color and texture, one couple used thrifted treasures and modern design to amplify their lakeside A-frame.

72 5 BATHROOM REFRESHES

Get ready in style with a bathroom space that reflects your personality. These ideas can kick-start your renovation vision board.



74



86

74 ORIGINAL GLORY

A love for preserving history and a knack for modern design made an interior designer's own home reno project a true masterpiece of innovation and restoration.

84 5 LAUNDRY UPGRADES

Make every corner count in a small utility room by integrating smart storage ideas, reimaged materials, and personal style.

86 WARM WELCOME

Interior designer Candace Griffin's home is a master class in mixing custom design, vintage finds, and color choices that pushed her own creative boundaries.

94 5 BACKYARD MAKEOVERS

Enjoy more moments under the sky. These homeowners created zones to cleverly upgrade their outdoor living space.

96 WHY WE DIY (AND WHAT HOLDS US BACK)

We studied your project habits and first-hand experiences to create the first-ever *Better Homes & Gardens* DIY Report. (Psst... you're not the only one with an abandoned home project!)



page 74

ON OUR COVER

PHOTOGRAPHER DAVID LAND
STYLIST EDDIE ROSS



from the EDITOR

What's in a name? Well, for this magazine, a lot. For months, the title sat as the ever-enticing *Renovation TBD*. We knew what we wanted in the issue—beautiful, smart, and inspiring home updates complete with surprising before-and-after photos. But what do you call that? Turn to: many rounds of “how about this” or “what about that” or “why not this *and* that.”

Next, we looked to our readers, asking a panel of about 100 people to weigh in. It's kind of like a taste test—but with text. Does “renovation” speak to you? How about “remodel”? What does the word “refresh” convey? The homes featured in this issue contain a mix of skills (DIY to professional work) and projects (easy weekend upgrades to stripped-down-to-the-studs overhauls). Our title needed to say the same—preferably in fewer words.

After much discussion we landed on *Renovate & Refresh*, but this still didn't feel right. Renovations are big, scary, expensive, and tend to take over your life. But “remodel”? Remodel felt nice. A remodel means scrolling through Pinterest. It's picking out fabric swatches. It's the gentle roll of fresh paint on a dingy wall. (Too much? You get the point.)

So here you have it: the brand-new *Remodel & Refresh*. We hope you find the inspiration needed to tackle your next project. And, hey, consider using our method for making a big design decision: Ask others for their opinion, come up with a plan, change that plan at least once, and finally land on something that everyone can live with.

EMILY ELVERU
Editor

remodel & REFRESH™

Editor EMILY ELVERU
Designer EMILY BUTTERWORTH
Contributing Copy Editor ANDREA COOLEY
Proofreader MARTHA COLOFF LONG
Administrative Assistant ASHLEY JACOBS
Editorial Apprentice EMILY CARREON

FOOD

Executive Editor SHELLI MCCONNELL
Senior Content Manager JESSICA SAARI CHRISTENSEN
Senior Editor CAITLYN DIIMIG, RD
Editor MADALYN BENDGEN
Senior Brand Manager JULI HALE
Brand Manager SARAH BREKKE, M.S.
Culinary Specialist EMILY NIENHAUS
Senior Food Stylist KELSEY MOYLAN
Senior Food Stylist and Coordinator LAUREN MCANELLY
Food Stylists HOLLY DREESMAN, ANNIE PROBST

HOME, GARDEN & QUILTING

Executive Editor KATY KIICK CONDON
Senior Editors DORIS BRUNETTE, NICOLE DEAN,
EMILY ELVERU, KRISSA ROSSBUND
Editorial Apprentice EMILY CARREON
Better Homes & Gardens Test Garden® Manager
SANDRA GERDES

ART

Design Directors STEPHANIE HUNTER, KIMBERLY MORGAN METZ,
MICK SCHNEPF
Art Directors EMILY BUTTERWORTH, KRISTIN CLEVELAND,
NIKKI SANDERS, ELIZABETH STUMBO
Associate Art Director ALISON GAMM

EDITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

Copy Chief ERIKA BJORKLUND
Senior Copy Editors MADELAINE JEROUSEK-SMITH,
MARTHA COLOFF LONG
Copy Editor ELLA FIELD
Senior Manager, Editorial Operations HOLLY PRUETT
Assistant Editorial Business Manager GABRIELLE RENSLOW
Senior Editorial Operations Specialist ASHLEY JACOBS
Editorial Operations Specialist SANDRA JOHNSON
Photography Coordinator JAKE ROUDABUSH
Senior Director, Print Premedia Services DALE TUNENDER
Senior Director, Quality JOSEPH KOHLER
Vice President, Content Studios ALLISON LOWERY
Director, Test Kitchen LYNN BLANCHARD
Studios Content Director GREG LUNA
Photo Studio Set Construction Manager DAVE DECARLO
Senior Stylist and Producer JOSEPH WANEK
Stylists BREANNA GHAZALI, LEXI JUHL
Studios Prop Coordinator HOLLY RAIBIKIS
Premedia Trafficking Supervisor SARAH SCHUSTER
Premedia Imaging Specialist JACQUES LIZOTTE
Premedia Color Quality Analyst SARAH SCHROEDER

PREMIUM PUBLISHING

Vice President & General Manager
JEREMY BILOON
Vice President & Editor in Chief JILL WAAGE
Director, Editorial Operations & Finance
GREG KAYKO

Executive Director, Business Development &
Partnerships MEGAN PEARLMAN
Associate Director, Business Development &
Partnerships NINA REED
Senior Director, Brand Marketing JEAN KENNEDY
Associate Director, Brand Marketing
KATHERINE BARNET
Senior Brand Manager GEOFFREY WOHLGAMUTH
Brand Manager MIA RINALDI
Associate Brand Manager GABBY AMELLO

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Business Director JENNA BATES
Senior Business Manager LISA CARLSON

CIRCULATION

Consumer Marketing Manager
LYNN BOLINGER

ADVERTISING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Vice President & Head of Sales, Lifestyle
TIFFANY EHASZ
tiffany.ehasz@dotdashmdp.com
Executive Director & Food and Beverage Lead
DAVID GINSBERG
david.ginsberg@dotdashmdp.com
Executive Director & Home/CPG Lead
MARGARET GRAFF
margaret.graff@dotdashmdp.com

ADVERTISING OPERATIONS

1716 Locust St., Des Moines, IA 50309-3023
Production Director PATRICK MCGOWAN
Senior Production Manager, Country Home
JULEE EVANS
Production Managers APRIL GROSS,
TREVI JONES, ASHLEY SCHAUBROECK

DIRECT MEDIA

Executive Director TYLER HUB
tyler.hub@dotdashmdp.com

DOTDASH MEREDITH

President, Lifestyle
ALYSIA BORSA
Senior Vice President & Group General Manager
MÉLANIE BERLIET

Chief Revenue Officer
BRIAN KIGHTLINGER
Vice President, Lifestyle Marketing
KRISTIN GUINAN

CONTRIBUTING FIELD EDITORS

Sarah Alba, Darra Baker, Andrea Caughey, Kimberly Clarke, Jennifer Berno DeCleene, Paige Porter Fischer, Jessica Brinkert Holtam, Lacey Howard, Marni Elyse Katz, Kelly Kegans, Karin Lidbeck-Brent, Elaine Markoutsas, Tovah Martin, Cathy Still McGowin, Anna Molvik, Lisa Mowry, Eleanor Lynn Nesmith, Heidi Pearson, Karen Reinecke, Margaret Zainey Roux, Khristi S. Zimmeth

FOR EDITORIAL QUESTIONS, EMAIL MEREDITH.PREMIUMPUBLISHING@DOTDASHMDP.COM

OR WRITE US AT REMODEL & REFRESH,
PREMIUM PUBLISHING,
1716 LOCUST ST., DES MOINES, IA 50309-3023



For syndication or international licensing requests, email syndication.generic@dotdashmdp.com.
For reprint and reuse permission, email mmc.permissions@dotdashmdp.com.

PRINTED IN THE USA

home IMPROVE *reality check*

THE LIKELIHOOD OF GETTING YOUR MONEY OUT OF A HOME REMODELING DEPENDS ON THE PROJECT AND WHEN YOU PLAN TO SELL.

But a bump at resale isn't the only way to measure whether an upgrade is worth it. Certain intangibles—your enjoyment of the space and your life in it—are part of a complicated and personal calculus. To help you make your best decisions, we asked the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate (BHGRE) agents which projects add money to your home's value at resale.

Jessica Lautz, deputy chief economist and vice president of research at NAR, says our housing market might be at the beginning of a remodeling renaissance. The past five years brought both historically low interest rates and high prices,

providing valid reasons to own a home longer.

"People have typically moved an average of every six to seven years. Now we're staying in a home for about 10 years," Lautz says. "What happens when you stay longer? You have an opportunity to reimagine your home through improvements."

No matter how long you plan to stay, you want to be smart about how you invest in your home. There's no formula for how many years you need to live with your project to get the greatest return when you sell, but be sure of these three things: You can afford the improvement, you won't need to move immediately, and the project will make you happy.

The cost-return percentages shared in this story were figured using landscaper and remodeler data and Realtor estimates. Your actual costs for any of these home improvements will vary depending on your geographic location, specific property, and the scope of the work.

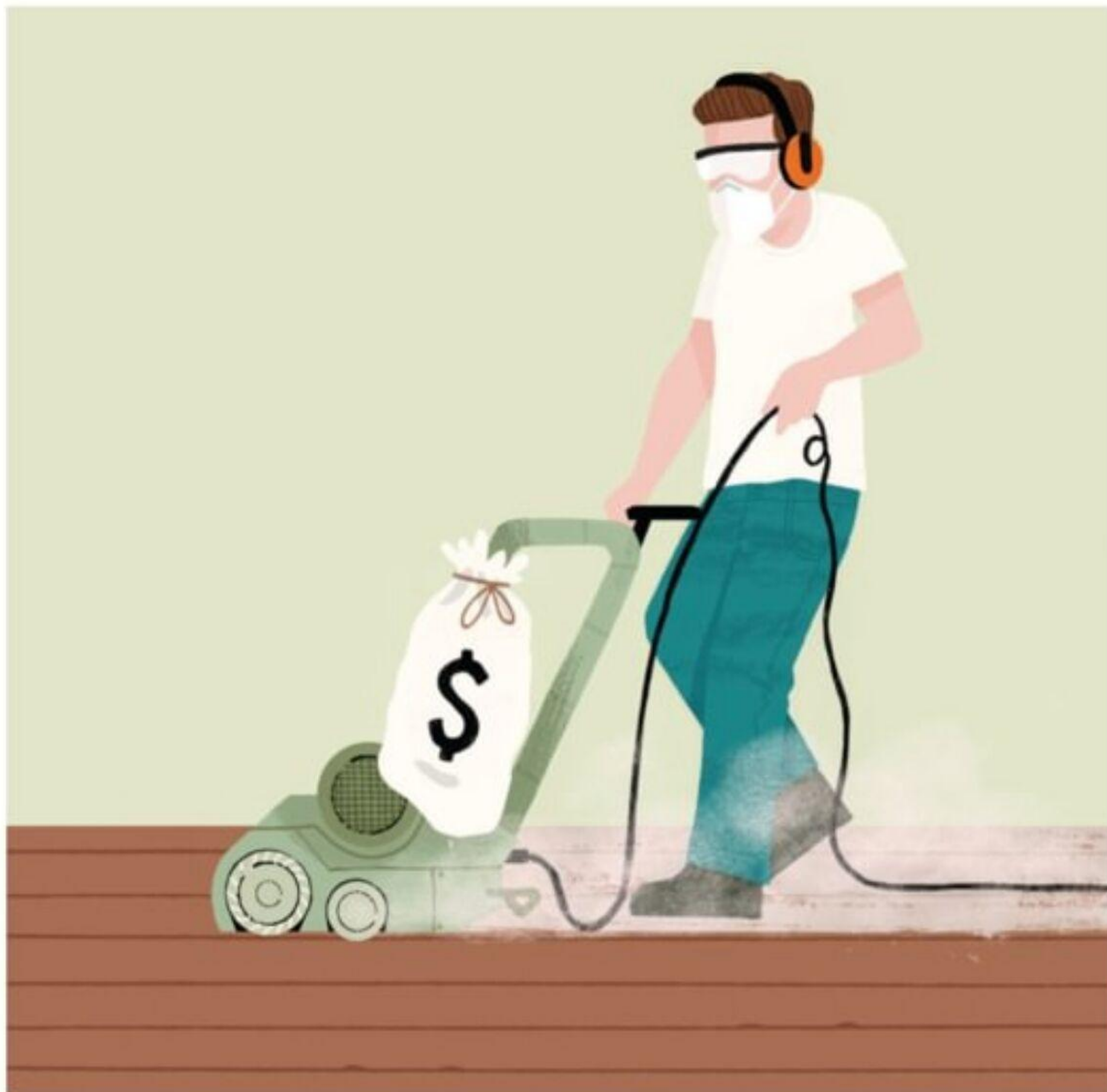
MENT



ILLUSTRATOR AGENT: ANNA GOODSON

NO-BRAINER UPGRADES

These projects typically guarantee a 100-percent (or more) return on your investment. Proceed with confidence.



HARDWOOD FLOORING REFINISH

If you want to upgrade your hardwood floors, try refinishing. Because flooring covers so much surface area, a refresh here provides a visual boost to the entire room. A classic, medium-tone stain color will give you staying power. Lautz notes that any stain color can look dated in time, so avoid very dark or very light stains. To refinish the floor in an 18x20-foot room, including

new baseboards, it'll cost about \$3,400.

RETURN: 147%

NEW WOOD FLOORING

It's a solid choice to install prefinished, solid oak flooring, whether it's to replace an existing wood floor or other flooring in your home. The typical cost for an 18x20-foot room is \$5,500.

RETURN: 118%

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

You can never make a first impression

twice, so a well-cared-for landscape will make your home memorable. If you pay for mowing, annual mulching, pruning shrubs, and refreshing perennials or annuals, you'll get your money back when you sell. The typical investment here is about \$4,800.

RETURN: 104%

INSULATION UPGRADE

Blow 10 inches of cellulose insulation into the attic to upgrade the R-value from R-13 to R-48. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating power. Your home will be more efficient to heat or cool and more comfortable to live in. The typical cost is about \$2,500.

RETURN: 100%

ROOFING

If you own a home for long, you'll likely face the need to replace asphalt shingles. It's always worth it to keep your home tight and dry. The scope of work includes tearing off old roofing and reroofing with architectural asphalt shingles. The typical cost for a 2,450-square-foot, two-story house is about \$12,000, which includes new flashing around pipes and a chimney, and a new ridge vent.

RETURN: 100%

GARAGE DOORS

Garage doors can take up a lot of visual space on your property. New doors are a relatively affordable way to make a big impact, and they pay for themselves when it's time to sell. Replace an older double garage door with a new overhead insulated, standard steel door with factory finish. The typical cost for one is about \$2,000.

RETURN: 100%

OUTDOOR KITCHEN

An outdoor kitchen that makes entertaining and dining enjoyable typically costs \$15,000; you can install an inset grill, stainless drawers, an ice chest, sink, and concrete counter. Chances are buyers will be interested.

RETURN: 100%

NEW PATIO

Patios are appealing. They don't require the maintenance of a deck, and they help define spaces in your landscape. An 18x16-foot concrete paver patio that's dry-set over compacted gravel and sand runs about \$10,500. It's close to a full return and still a no-brainer to us.

RETURN: 95%

THINK BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You likely won't get all your money back from these projects, but if you plan to stay in your home, you'll benefit by living with the improvements.

NEW WOOD DECK

Add a 14x18-foot cedar wood deck to the house for \$16,900 and gain an exterior living or dining room for more months of the year. The cost includes cedar decking, railing, and stair treads. Stairs are 4 feet wide with an open riser. Finish the wood with a clear deck sealer.

RETURN: 89%

BASEMENT CONVERSION

When you want to stretch your living space, a basement conversion is a good place to start. Experts in the remodeling trade say you'll likely spend about \$57,500 to convert an existing 15x25-foot unfinished basement space into a finished rec room with a TV; your budget will cover insulation, drywall, recessed lights, two new windows, and indoor-outdoor carpet to cover a moisture-resistant carpet pad.

RETURN: 86%

FIBER CEMENT SIDING

Remove old siding and replace with factory-primed and -painted fiber cement siding, and caulk all seams. The typical cost for a 2,450-square-foot home is \$18,600.

RETURN: 86%

BATHROOM RENOVATION

Remodelers say you'll pay about \$35,000 to tear out an old bathroom and replace everything for better functionality and livability. This buys you upgraded fixtures, including a tub/shower enclosure with ceramic-tile walls, semicustom double-sink vanity with touchless faucets, humidity-sensing exhaust fan, and toilet.

RETURN: 71%

KITCHEN UPGRADE

Remake your kitchen for better function and updated looks. A \$45,000 budget to upgrade includes new energy-efficient



appliances, laminate countertops, sheet vinyl flooring, and cabinetry refacing with veneer and new hardware. Add a new sink and faucet, and repaint the walls and ceiling for a totally satisfying remake.

RETURN: 67%

WOOD WINDOWS

For about \$48,000, you can replace 27 windows with new insulated wood windows featuring factory-painted, metal-clad exterior frames and natural wood interior frames; argon-filled, low-emissivity (low-E) glass; and tilt-in sashes for washing. This lets you replace trim, caulk seams, and paint.

RETURN: 63%

FIBERGLASS FRONT DOOR

Fiberglass doors cost more than steel ones, but they come in other design options. Typical cost of this improvement is \$3,500 and includes a door with a three-panel window, a better-quality locking handle set and dead bolt, plus new exterior and interior trim painted to match the existing trim.

RETURN: 60%

FIRE FEATURE

You can expect to spend about \$9,000 to install a dry stacked-stone firepit with a gas burner and wrap it with a flagstone patio that's about 10 feet in diameter. A firepit gives your landscape a focal point and

a place to make memories with your friends and family.

RETURN: 56%

IN-GROUND POOL

You can install an 18x36-foot pool with a depth ranging from 3 to 7 feet, a standard filtration system, and a wide concrete deck for about \$90,000. You'll never get your money back, but it might make you really happy, and in some markets it can help attract buyers. "Pools help a house sell for more and sell faster in my market," says BHGRE agent Randy Kennedy, who's in central Florida.

RETURN: 56%

EXTERIOR *upgrade*

PRODUCER **LACEY HOWARD**

curbside CHARM

THE KEY TO UPDATING A HOME'S LOOK? THE ABILITY TO IMAGINE WHAT'S POSSIBLE. GET INSPIRED BY INSIGHTFUL HOMEOWNERS WHO TRUSTED THEIR VISION AND UNCOVERED OODLES OF APPEAL.



MIDCENTURY REVIVAL

The most important part of a renovation isn't always what you change but what you keep. While some homeowners would have stripped away the 1960s elements of this ranch, Billy Joe and Vanessa Reilly filtered every choice—materials, fixtures, and furniture—through the lens of their love for midcentury design. “When we saw it, we knew what it could be. The brick, the architecture. It was just what we were looking for,” Vanessa says. Now, thanks to their restrained, style-appropriate updates, the Atlanta home shows its age—in all the right ways.

REVAMP THE ENTRY

The sprawling ranch home now fully shows off its vintage style, while clever design solutions hide problem areas.

- A** Horizontal slat panels disguise mismatched windows on the left side of the house and cover the planter in front of the carport on the right.
- B** River rock and large pavers break up all the concrete between the front door and driveway.
- C** Wood elements repeat across the facade to create balance.
- D** The windows in the new front door echo the horizontal lines of the exterior brick.



GET THE LOOK

Channel the aesthetic of iconic midcentury modern design when choosing outdoor accessories.

1. INSIDE OUT

A teak mat has modern attitude while providing an eco-friendly and weather-resistant design. Water and debris from shoes won't collect on top. Teak Indoor/Outdoor Doormat 20x32, \$90; crateandbarrel.com

2. DISTINCTIVE SILHOUETTE

Butterfly chairs were popular in the 1950s, but the style is still an excellent way to inject a pop of color. Patio Butterfly Chair in Gold by Algoma, \$80; target.com

3. QUIET LIGHT

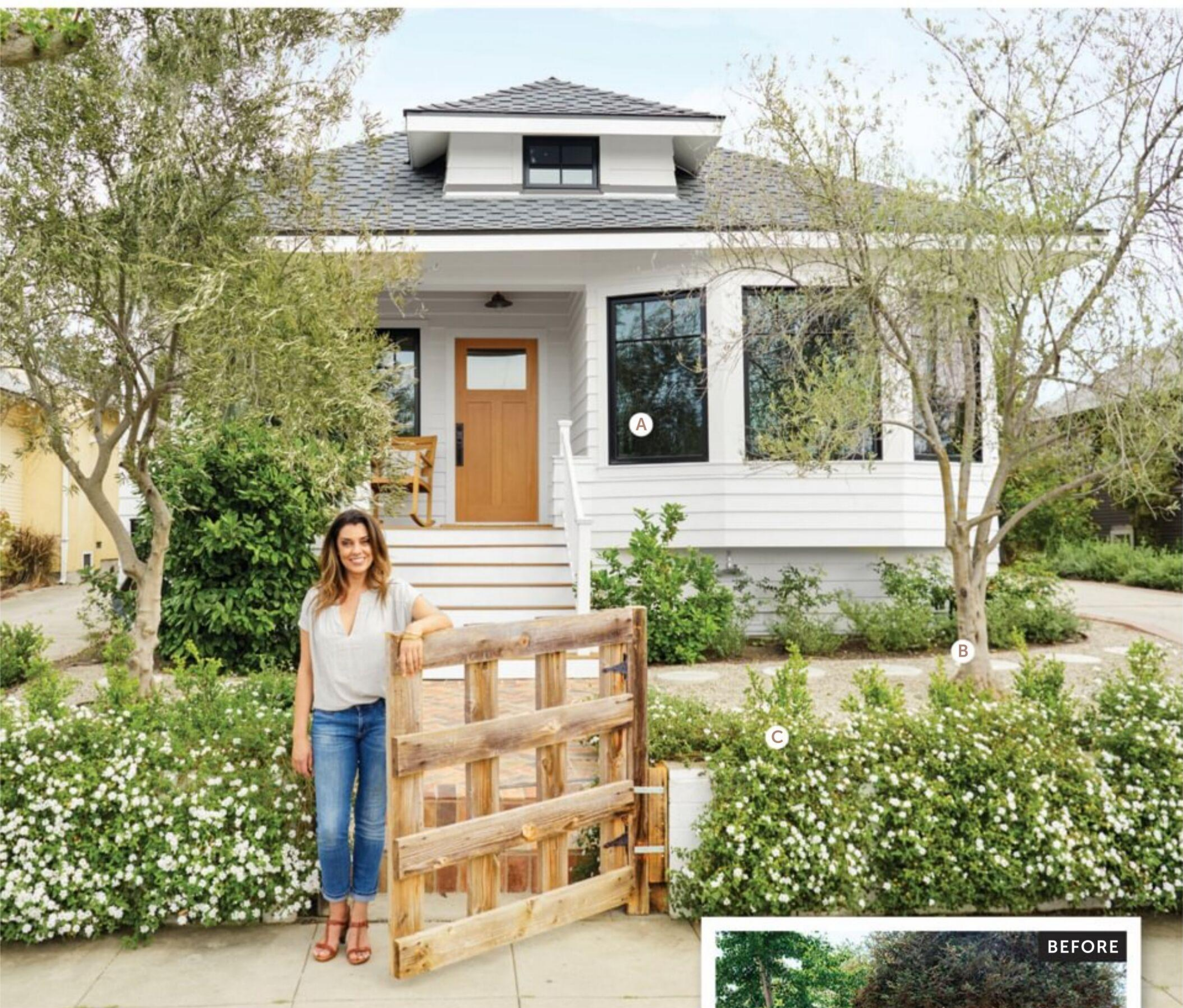
This cylinder sconce has simple, clean lines and understated modern style. Dylan 2 Light Cylinder Outdoor Aluminum Wall Light in Black, \$155; allmodern.com

4. THE BIG SCREEN

Camouflage air conditioners, trash cans, or other unsightly must-haves with a wood slat screen and planter box duo. Plant a vining flower for added color. Concord Collection Cedar Wood Outdoor Freestanding Privacy Fence Screen with Planter Box from Enclo, \$340; wayfair.com

5. VINTAGE VIBES

Produced by several companies in the 1950s, this style of planter was never trademarked, and its designer was never identified. This rendition is made with molded fiberglass perched atop a tripod of powder-coated steel. Bullet Planter by Hip Haven, \$215-\$225; dwr.com



CRAFTSMAN MAKEOVER

“I was hoping for something so ugly that it would scare off everyone but me,” interior designer Rosa Beltran-Francis says of a house hunt that resulted in her buying a 1936 Craftsman bungalow in Los Angeles.

“As a designer, I could see past its shabby facade. So I trusted my gut and made the leap.” Acting as her own contractor, she launched a 10-month complete renovation. Outside, it was hard to see the house hiding behind overgrown hedges and trees. “I kept the cinder block retaining wall and the original entry gate, but everything else got the boot,” she says. “I wanted it to look and feel perfectly aged and comfy, like a family home that has known years of love, because that’s how we intend to live in it.”





GET THE LOOK

A mix of Craftsman and modern farmhouse items update without ignoring the home's authentic design.

1. FRONT AND CENTER

Rosa chose a fir wood door with Craftsman styling. "The clear finish and two-panel design play off the wood decking," she says. 6801 Craftsman Two Panel-One Lite in Douglas Fir, starting at \$1,600; simpsondoor.com

2. WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

Black aluminum-clad windows with grid grilles update the home's aesthetic and energy efficiency. Pinnacle Wood/Wood-Clad Windsor Windows, custom pricing; windsorpinnacle.com

3. POLISHED LOCK

A modern, clean-lined lever handle has sleek styling and is easy to operate with an elbow when your hands are full. Similar available: Tolland Brass Entrance Set with Lever Handle in Satin Black, \$369; signaturehardware.com

4. SOFT ROCK

Rocking chairs in a similar finish as the decking and front door give Rosa and her family—husband Jon and sons Beni and Mason—a place to sit and enjoy their neighborhood. Outdoor Laci Rocking Solid Wood Chair in Natural Brown by August Grove, \$257; wayfair.com

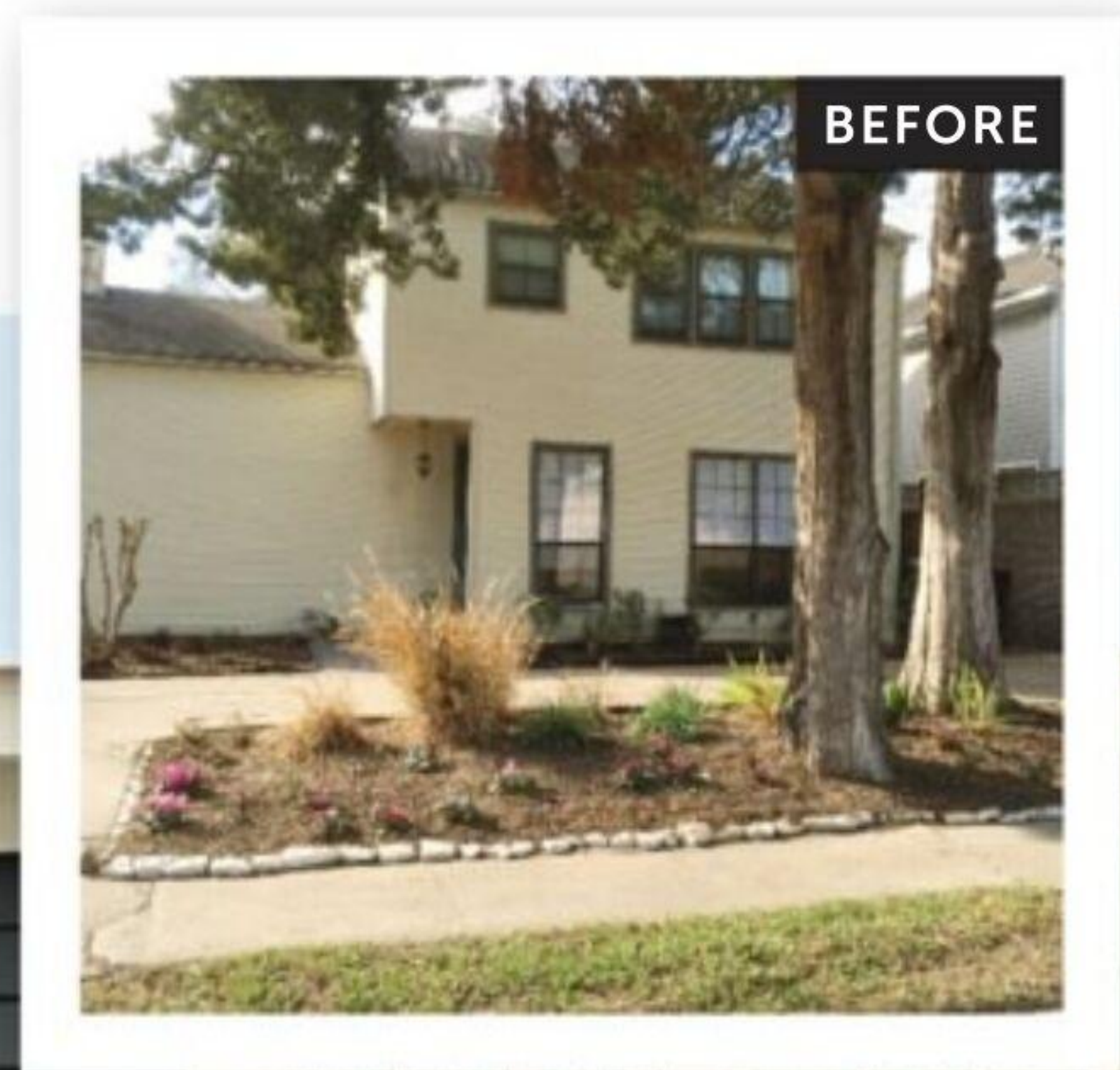
AIR IT OUT

Rosa Beltran-Francis' goal for the project: lighten and brighten the house but stay true to its original spirit.

A New windows, fiber-cement siding, and a two-panel front door restore Craftsman-style details to the facade. Thick asphalt shingles from GAF resemble more expensive slate or wood shingles at a budget-friendly price.

B "It made me a little sad to take out the redwood planted close to the front of the house," Rosa says of the large tree a previous owner had topped with hopes that it might flourish, but it never did. "I replaced it with a pair of olive trees, and now we get so much more light."

C Hedges blocked the house and drew attention to an old garden wall. Rosa replaced the hedges with lantana, "a plant I saw growing wild on the side of the highway," she says. "I figured if it could grow there, it could grow anywhere." White flowers now spill over the wall.



COTTAGE-STYLE FACELIFT

When magazine scout and stylist Susan Fox found herself between tenants, she decided to make a few updates to her 1979 Houston investment property. The front door was hidden, notched into the side of the facade. The windowless wall on the left made the exterior appear lopsided and limited the natural light inside. A sketch by her builder showed Susan what a difference a new entrance could make. From there, a few simple but significant changes transformed the asymmetrical front into a charming cottage entry. The facelift motivated Susan to sell her primary residence and turn her rental into her home sweet-looking home.

ADD VISUAL BALANCE

A dramatic facelift delivers cottage-style charm and a new sense of symmetry to this outdated house.

- A** A covered porch frames the door and balances the look. Battens—vertical wood strips—and sage paint provide a focal point.
- B** The lopsided structure got a dose of harmony with the addition of a large divided-light window on the left side of the house to mirror one on the right.
- C** Susan framed in the original side-open front door. (That space is now a foyer coat closet.) The new door faces the street for a welcoming appearance.



GET THE LOOK

Lean in to a cottage ambience with accessories and fixtures that feel sweet (but not saccharine).

1. DOUBLE DUTCH

Let a breeze waft in on warm spring days and add authentic country charm with a Dutch door. 36x80-inch 9 Lite Prehung Dutch Door from Jeld-Wen, \$2,198; homedepot.com

2. ARTFUL ADDITION

Available in square, round, and rectangular shapes, this weather-resistant planter has the elegant look of stone without the weight. Rodin Round Planter in Zinc, starting at \$150; ballarddesigns.com

3. PERSONAL STYLE

Available in seven fonts, five finishes, and five height options (from 4-inch to 15-inch), these sleek house numbers elevate curb appeal in a style of your choosing. SoCal Numbers + Letters, \$25 each; modernhousenumbers.com



BEFORE



SLOPED-YARD STUCCO

Before architect Joy Martin and her late husband, Ted, got their hands on a 1915 Minneapolis home, it suffered from a play-it-safe paint job and lackluster landscaping. The couple spent three and a half years transforming the home, adding modern finishes to highlight the property's best features. Dark paint on the body of the house with lighter trim and a punchy front door took their stucco from mousy to magnetic. Vision accomplished.



UPDATE THE LANDSCAPING

The tiered front yard was void of any plant life beyond grass. Now, plants soften hard edges.

A Fond du Lac limestone walls set the stage for a lush perennial garden that Joy planted herself using divided plants gifted by family and neighbors. "My goal was to create a space with more flowers than grass, where we could enjoy our small yard and engage with the neighborhood. The terrace became our front porch," Joy says.

GET THE LOOK

Consider these exterior level-ups inspired by Joy Martin's home.

1. BRIGHT IDEA

Old (Mission-style lines) meets new (a chic cylindrical form) in this porch light. Luminata 9-inch Oil-Rubbed Bronze LED Outdoor Light, \$166; lampsplus.com

2. STEEL YOURSELF

Corten steel is strong and corrosion-resistant, and it weathers to a beautiful rust finish. This planter comes in six shapes and sizes, with a drainage hole and pads for surface protection. Arcadia Garden Products Corten Steel Planters, from \$103; homedepot.com

3. FETCHING MAIL

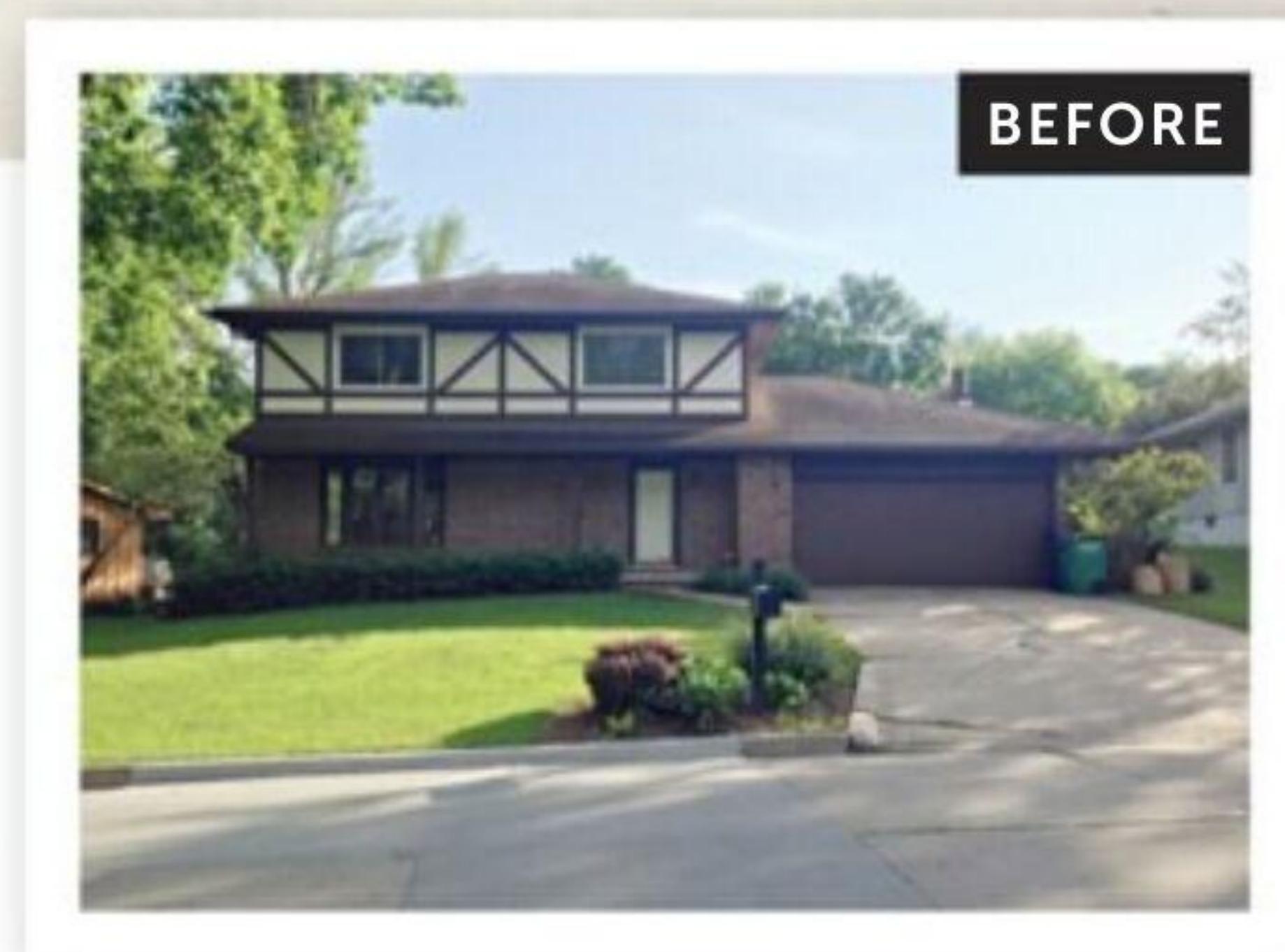
Big enough for magazines and small packages, this sturdy bronze-finished mailbox has a top that looks like a standing seam roof. Modern Farmhouse Mailbox, \$99; potterybarn.com





TUDOR REDO

An exterior facelift in black and white celebrates—rather than hides—the 1970s Tudor Revival character of this Midwest home. Ashley and Connor Moore loved the frame and stucco details on their 1976 house, but the overall look was too dark and outdated, and the brick all but disappeared under the overhang. To reimagine the facade, they searched Pinterest for inspiration, then crowdsourced suggestions on Houzz. One commenter gave them the confidence they sought: “Paint the brick. Don’t be afraid to make the house your own.” So they went for it and the results were exactly right.





GET THE LOOK

Round out a new color palette and amp up the curb appeal with small details.

1. STREET CRED

Bold black numbers are easy to spot against painted-white brick. Aurele 4-inch Matte Black House Numbers, \$8 each; cb2.com

2. MIX & MATCH

Gather a group of textured planters to create a warm welcome on the porch. 10-inch Channing Woven Black Ceramic Planter, \$17; 13-inch Resin Moon Planter (concrete finish), \$15; 14-inch Laurie Resin Planter (white with wood base), \$26; walmart.com/BHG

3. LET IT SHINE

Repeat a distinctive wall sconce across the exterior for a cohesive feel. Turner Black Farmhouse Indoor/Outdoor Wall Sconce with Clear Seeded Glass, \$95; homedepot.com

4. YOU'VE GOT MAIL

A boxy, contemporary mailbox echoes the home's updated look at the curb. Anthony Modern Aluminum Post-Mounted Mailbox, \$225 (post sold separately); vsons.com

MODERNIZE THE PALETTE

Get a fresh look on a dated exterior by changing the colors. It's simple—especially if the bones are good.

A Up top, the Moores re-created the original Tudor details using James Hardie fiber cement products. They chose a factory color for the stucco-look panels (Arctic White)—which accelerated the install and reduced cost of painting the whole house—and a custom black for the wood-look trim.

B On the first story, custom white Sherwin-Williams paint color-matched to the panels brightens the brick but preserves the visual interest it brings. "Painting the brick was cause for alarm in the neighborhood, but once the project came together, it was transformational," Connor says.

C The entry door also got an update with a wood-look style that warms up the scheme. A modern black garage door carries the palette across the entire facade.

51
WAYS TO
LOVE
THE HOME
YOU
HAVE



START WITH CURB APPEAL

Don't judge a book by its cover—and don't judge a home by its yard, right? Not so fast. The outside of your home gives guests and neighbors a sneak peek of what's inside. Spruce up your exterior with these simple, doable fixes.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

- Gently pressure-wash anything on the exterior that looks dingy or has any algae growth.
- Freshen your front door with a coat of paint. It's a simple way to make your home look current.
- Update the house numbers. Either remove them from the house and hit them with a fresh coat of spray paint or buy a new set. (For classic styles, we like Rejuvenation. For more variety, check out Etsy.)
- Evaluate your mailbox. Swapping in a new one is an inexpensive way to upgrade the entry.
- Water your lawn. Get the sprinkler hooked up and water in the morning for a lush, green yard. (Disregard this if you live in a water-restricted drought location.)
- Shape your shrubs. A fresh trim communicates that your home is cared for. Remove any dead limbs from bushes or trees. Call in a pro for difficult jobs.
- Add a few pots of colorful flowers at the entrance. For a quick container garden, buy mature hanging plants and transfer them into your pots. Add a new layer of mulch to your weeded beds.
- Knock back any spiderwebs and wash the windows.
- Make space to hide trash cans in the garage or shed.
- Clean your outdoor furniture pieces.
- Make sure the gutters are clear and properly draining.

WHEN STAGING A HOME TO SELL, STYLISTS FOCUS ON FIVE AREAS TO ATTRACT POTENTIAL BUYERS: ENHANCING CURB APPEAL, DECLUTTERING, MAKING REPAIRS, CLEANING, AND STYLING. BUT YOUR HOME DOESN'T NEED TO BE ON THE MARKET TO TRY OUT THEIR SECRETS FOR YOURSELF. THESE DO-IT-IN-A-WEEKEND TWEAKS ARE SIMPLE YET OH-SO SATISFYING. THERE'S NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL APPROACH: DO WHAT YOUR HOUSE NEEDS AND SKIP WHAT IT DOESN'T. WHO KNOWS? MAYBE FIXING THAT SQUEAKY DOOR WILL MAKE YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR SPACE EVEN MORE.

WRITER **KATHY BARNES** ILLUSTRATOR **ALANNA CAVANAGH**

DECLUTTER

Next, turn your attention to the interior of your home. Think of it in two phases: First is the mess. Second is excess.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

- Clear your flat surfaces. Start with mail on the kitchen counter, forgotten projects on bookshelves, and any items that accumulate on end tables, your dining table, the bathroom vanity, and the like.
- Remove unneeded furniture. You should be able to move through your rooms with ease.
- Open up your cabinets and declutter here too. If you have excess that makes the cabinets look stuffed, remove it now. Box it to sell, donate, or give away.
- Purge old craft materials and unfinished projects. If you plan to finish them someday, pack the items up and label what they are.
- Remove old invitations or kids' artwork hanging on your refrigerator. Refresh picture frames with new photos from recent trips or events.
- Follow the 20/20 rule if you're unsure. If it can be replaced for less than \$20 and within 20 minutes from home, it's not precious. Feel good about letting these items go.
- Take a hard look at your personal dumping ground. That might be a junk drawer for one person or a junk room for another. Look at the basement, attic, garage, and shed. Dig in and do the hard work to clear things.
- Let go of multiples, broken items, and things you don't use. Donate what you can to your favorite charitable organization.
- Check outside for clutter. The landscape should look neat.
- Tidy up pet items: the dog bed, portable kennel, litter boxes, food dishes, and toys.



MAKE REPAIRS

With your home fully decluttered, you're ready to take on any repairs. Think small, obvious problems. You can work up to big ones later.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

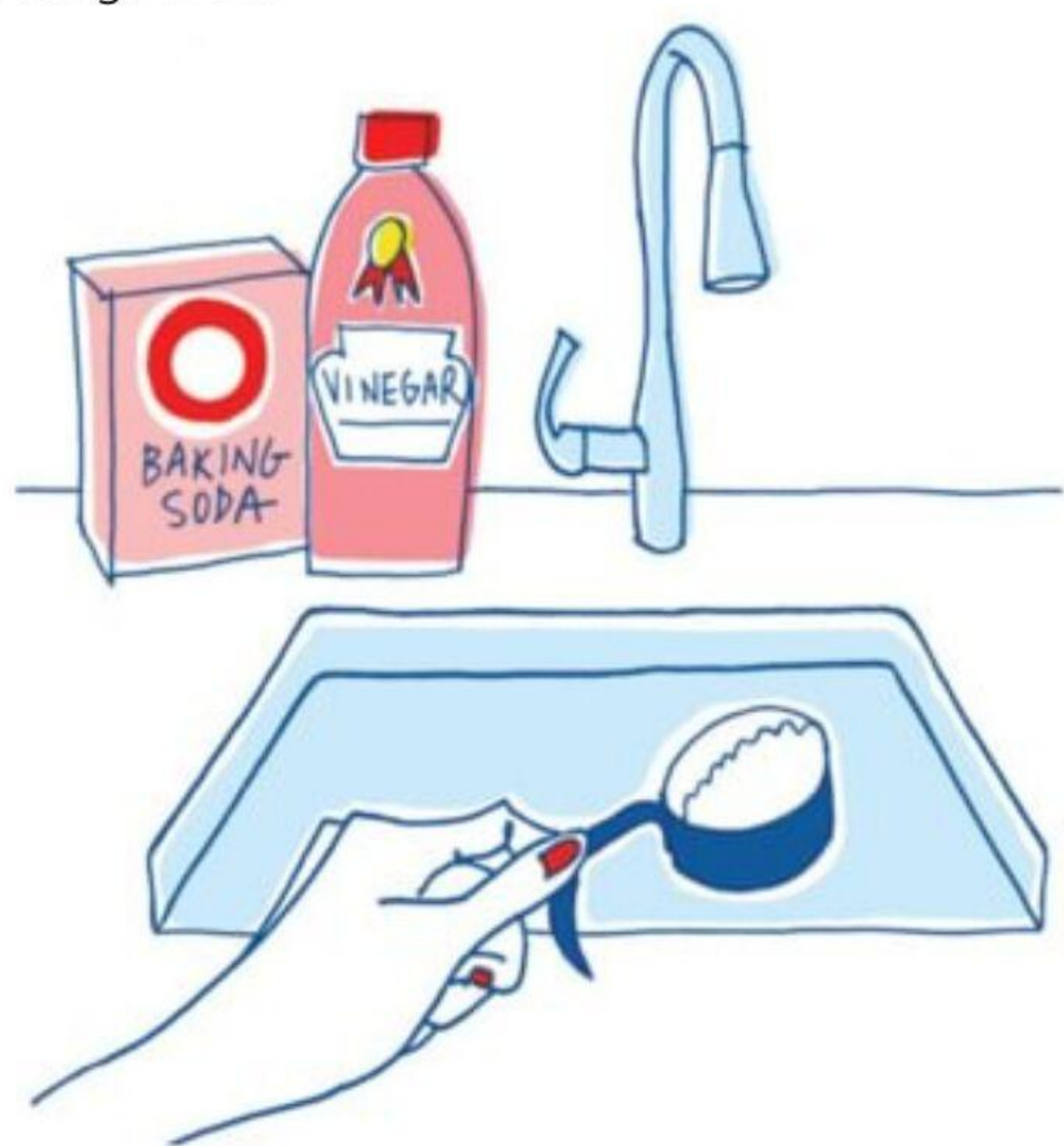
- Examine your walls and ceilings. You're looking for cracks, bubbling paint, anything out of the ordinary. Make repairs or call a professional if needed.
- Swap old lightbulbs for new and brighter LED options in kitchen fixtures. Repair any noisy fans, beeping alarm batteries, and blown lightbulbs.
- Check your cabinets. Make sure doors are secure and hardware is snug.
- Squeak-proof your doors. Give the hinges a shot of spray lubricant (such as WD-40) to reduce any sounds.
- Take a look at your trim. If you have gaps in the crown or base molding, add some caulk to fill the space.
- Examine plumbing fixtures. If there's any wiggle in the toilet, have a pro reset it. Check for drippy faucets and running toilets. Recaulk fixtures if needed.
- Search the tub or shower for any funky gunk on the seams. If the caulk or silicone looks gross, remove it and run a new bead.
- Pull back your curtains and make sure that all windows work and the glass is intact.
- Tour the exterior of your home. Clean and paint any flaking or peeling areas. Check your fascia boards. Gutters should be mounted correctly and secure.
- Walk your sidewalks and driveway for any cracks that could become a trip hazard. Fill minor cracks.

CLEAN IT UP

Consider hiring professional cleaners to do the initial dirty work. (For a few hundred dollars, commercial cleaners with all the right gear and products can make quick work of this.) Then you can do the follow-up cleaning. The No. 1 lesson: Work top to bottom.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

- Remove spiderwebs from the top of walls.
- Dust all ceiling fans.
- Clean inside the refrigerator, microwave, and oven.
- Clean your sinks with vinegar and baking soda.
- Run the dishwasher and washing machine on an empty cycle using vinegar in place of detergent—this will break down any mineral deposits.
- Clean the dryer vent.
- Wash your windows (bonus: wash the outside surface of windows too).
- Wipe down your cabinet doors.
- Clean vent covers and around electronics where dust gathers.
- Have air ducts cleaned. This can be particularly effective if you live with pets, because pet smells linger in the vents; each time your system kicks on, dust and pet hair recirculate. The cost depends on the size of your house, but expect to spend a few hundred dollars.
- Change your air filter. You can place a drop or two of essential oil on the filter to add a fresh scent throughout your house.
- Shampoo the carpets. Dust-mop and clean hard-surface floors.



LET IT GO *If you're stumped on what to get rid of, take a picture of the room and look at what stands out. It's helpful to see your space in this new two-dimensional way. Then move or remove the problem item.*



FACTOR IN STYLE

Once you've decluttered and cleaned, it's time to think like a decorator. The final step of staging involves styling for a cohesive look. Think of your senses as you arrange each space in your home.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO

- Give bedrooms a boutique hotel vibe. Replace the bedding with a down insert in a new white cover, then add pillows or a throw blanket.
- Use mirrors to create the look of more light and space.
- Open the curtains to fill the rooms with natural light.
- Don't worry about replacing worn furniture. A colorful textile artfully draped can cover what you'd like to minimize.
- Double-check the height you've hung art: A good visually pleasing height is centered about 5 feet above the floor. This is what you'll see in a museum or an art gallery.
- Bring in fresh greenery and flowers. Add an arrangement in a vase on a table and a bowl of fresh lemons in the kitchen. Put a small potted plant on the bedside table. We like to buy greenery and small plants at the grocery store for an affordable fresh fix.
- Plug in an oil freshener to give rooms a subtle yet clean smell.
- Stream soft, instrumental music for added relaxation.

RENT THIS WAY

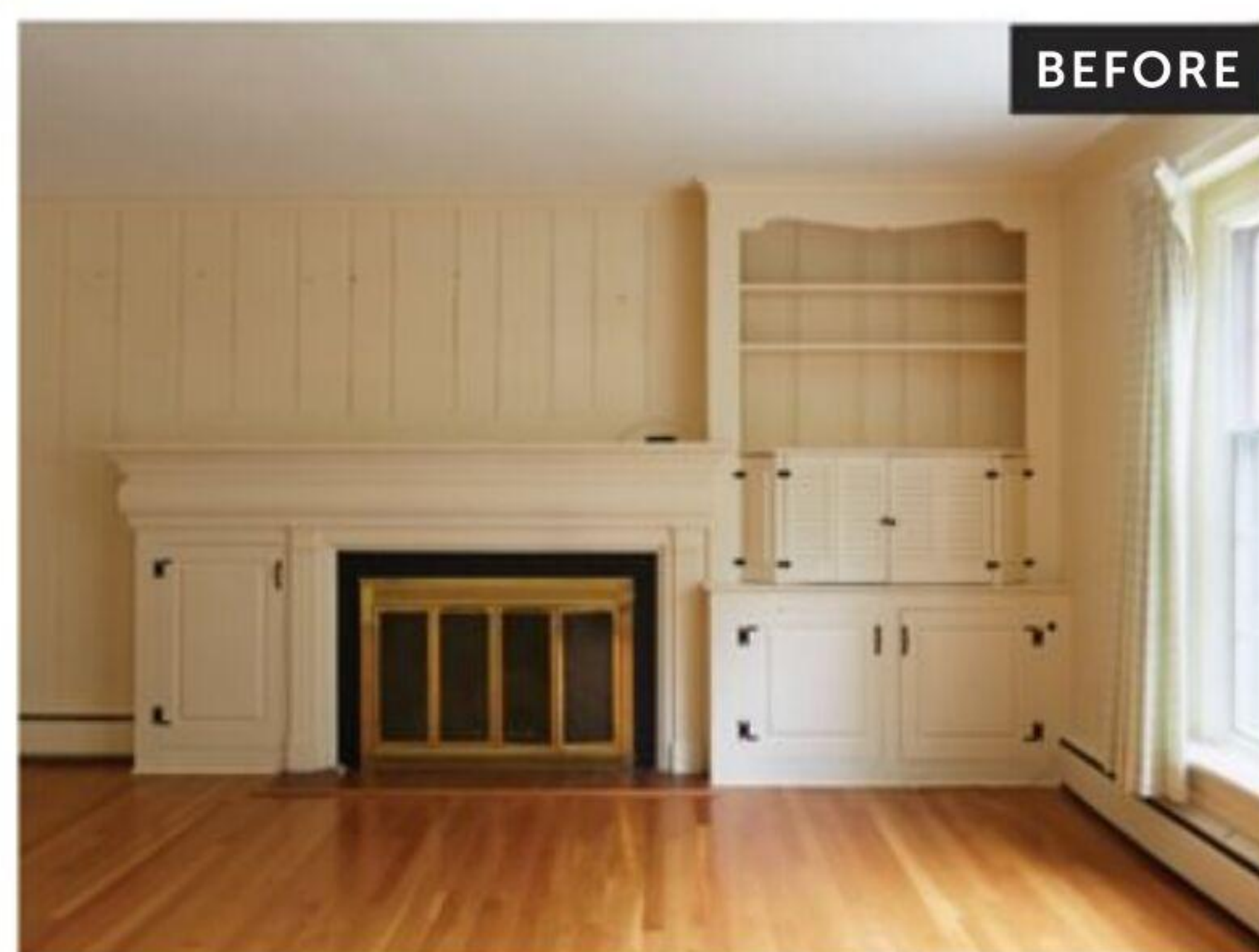
Working with her landlord, Keyanna Bowen made renter-friendly upgrades that showcase her style and enhance the home's best elements.

WRITER **KATHY BARNES**
PHOTOGRAPHER **KEYANNA BOWEN**





LIVING ROOM Keyanna Bowen and her husband may be renters, but they flex like owners. In the main living space, she removed dated elements of the fireplace and built-ins, swapped old hinges with concealed ones, and added trim to the front of shelves. New paint (Benjamin Moore Chantilly Lace) freshens the room—the same white used throughout the house.



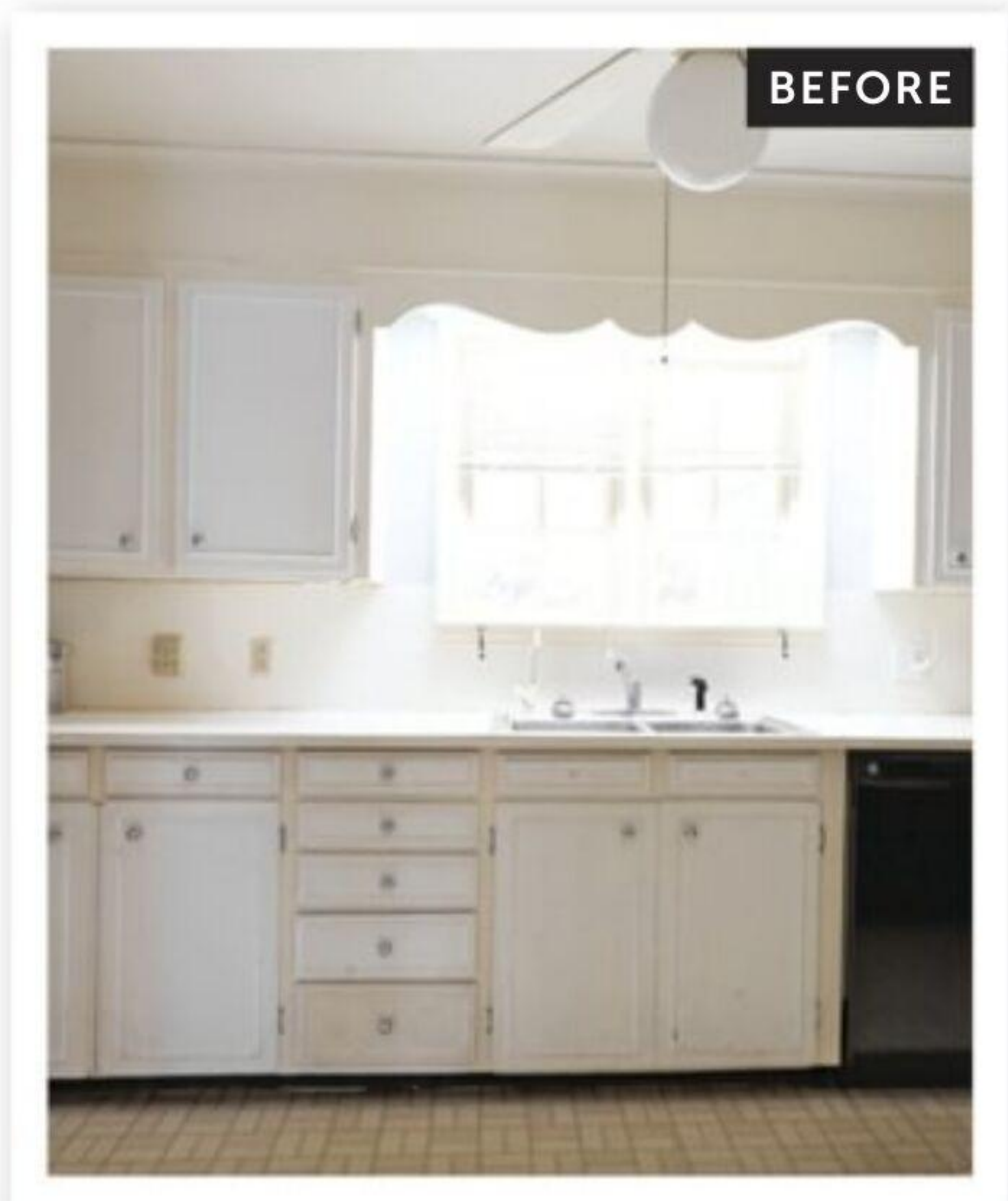


K

nowing how to make a rental feel like home wasn't a natural skill for Keyanna Bowen. But as a renter, she felt like part of a forgotten population in the design world and was inspired to help fill that void: She launched a blog, *East & Lane*, and a YouTube channel. She honed her photography and styling skills. She earned her real estate license and enrolled in carpentry training at her local community college. Her mix of talents eventually led to Magnolia Network and a show that tied her interests together.

At one point, Keyanna and husband Daniel were renting a builder-grade condo that left her feeling creatively flat, so she searched for a rental house she could make over and document. They moved to a home in Salisbury, Maryland, and Keyanna pitched the owner an arrangement: She would choose affordable, durable materials and make the improvements, and he would provide a budget. "Because I was asking him to invest in materials, I wanted to show that these ideas were improving the value of the property," Keyanna says. Over six years, the landlord contributed \$4,700.

She invested her own money in furnishings, art, rugs, curtains, and accents that she could take to her next home. When light fixtures, hardware, and faucets went beyond the budget, she bought and installed what she wanted, storing the owner's originals safely in the basement. She will swap them when it's time to move. "It takes patience and a plan, but it's worth it," she says.



KITCHEN Peel-and-stick flooring covers the out-of-style sheet vinyl. The nickel faucet, subway tile backsplash, and butcher-block countertop are affordable and widely available upgrades. Keyanna added new cup pulls and repainted the original knobs a high-contrast black.

BREAKFAST NOOK To cover the knotty wood paneling, Keyanna used a durable, stain-blocking primer before painting. She splurged on the sleek cone pendant from Rejuvenation and chose the upholstered bench for comfort.





■ **GUEST ROOM** This room was part of a collaborative project Keyanna worked on with blogger Emily Henderson. Keyanna's designs always include a vintage rug, a striking light fixture, and quality drapes.

"LIVING IN A RENTAL DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN TEMPORARY STYLE. I LOOK AT THIS PLACE LIKE IT'S MY HOME. TAKING OWNERSHIP, EVEN THOUGH I'M RENTING, HAS OPENED MY MIND AND INTENTIONALITY ON HOW I WANT MY SPACES TO LIVE AND FEEL."

KEYANNA BOWEN

DINING ROOM The cloudlike chandelier floats amid this space's blue walls (Benjamin Moore Boothbay Gray). The white oak table from ABC Carpet & Home was an investment. The sideboard is an IKEA Besta cabinet that Keyanna dressed up by adding half-round molding to the sides and doors.



PRIMARY BEDROOM

The low platform bed from Article and Cadence semi-flush-mount light fixture from Mitzi create the illusion of spaciousness. The vintage rug with subtle peachy tones inspired Keyanna to add the throw pillows and blanket to the bed. "If your bedroom is neutral, it's easy to swap out the bedding as your style evolves," she says.



RULES OF REPAIR

Make your sweat equity worth the investment. Keyanna Bowen shares how she negotiated with her landlord so you can do the same in your rental.

PROVIDE A PROPOSAL

"A well-thought-out plan can make all the difference when requesting changes to your space," says renter Keyanna Bowen. "Before I started, I put together a detailed plan with inspiration photos, a materials list, and an estimated budget."

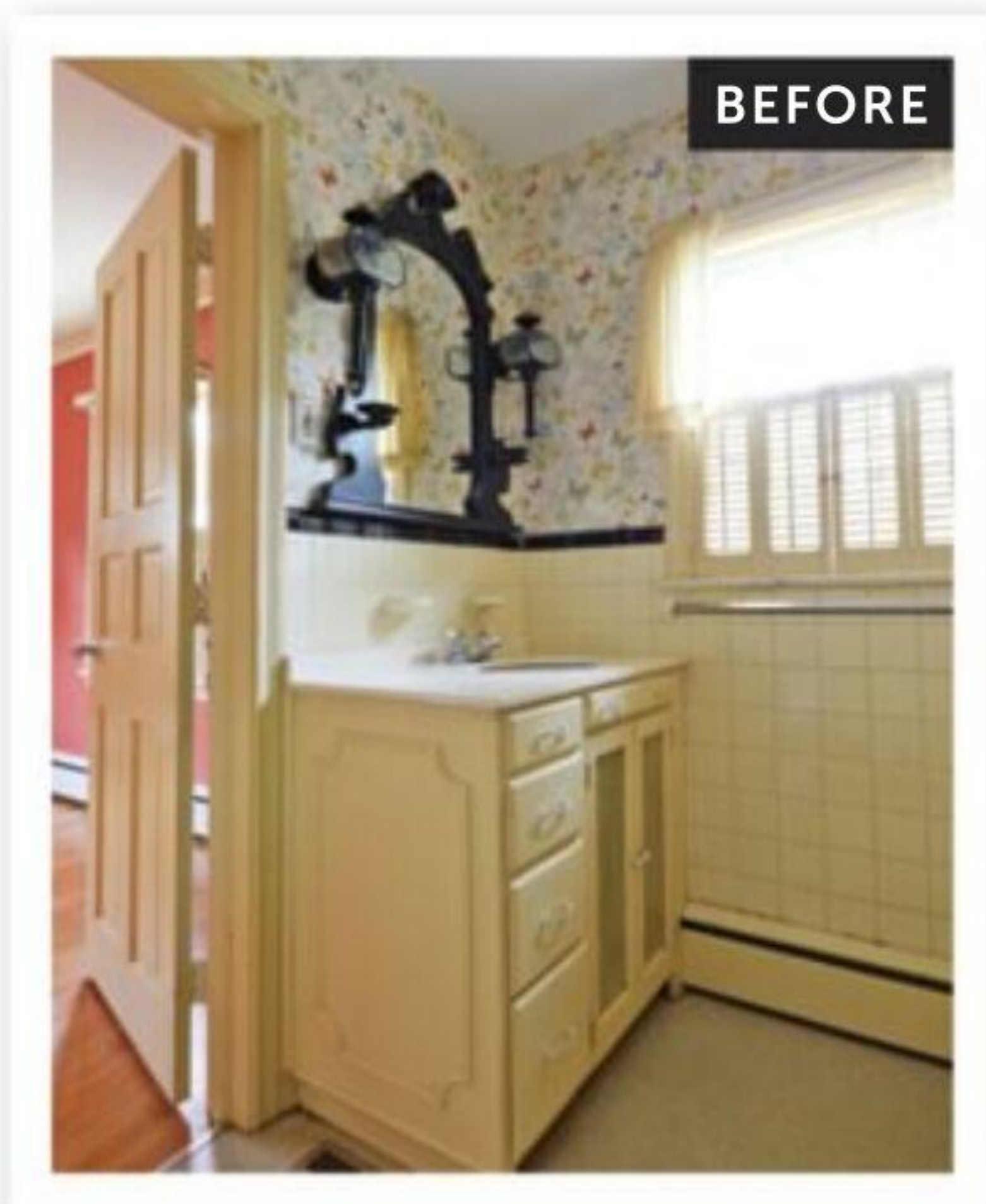
MAKE IT OFFICIAL

After agreeing on the project details, Keyanna and her landlord finalized everything in writing—a critical step. "I recommend creating a written agreement that specifies who is covering what costs and whether it's deducted from rent or paid by the tenant," she says. "If professional help is required, clearly communicate who is responsible for those costs too."

GET PHOTOS AND GO EASY

While an agreement increases the chance of getting your security deposit back, other methods can also safeguard it. "Take clear 'before' photos and focus on reversible changes like a peel-and-stick backsplash or hardware that's easy to swap out," Keyanna says. "These updates can transform your space without causing permanent damage."

—Lauren Landers

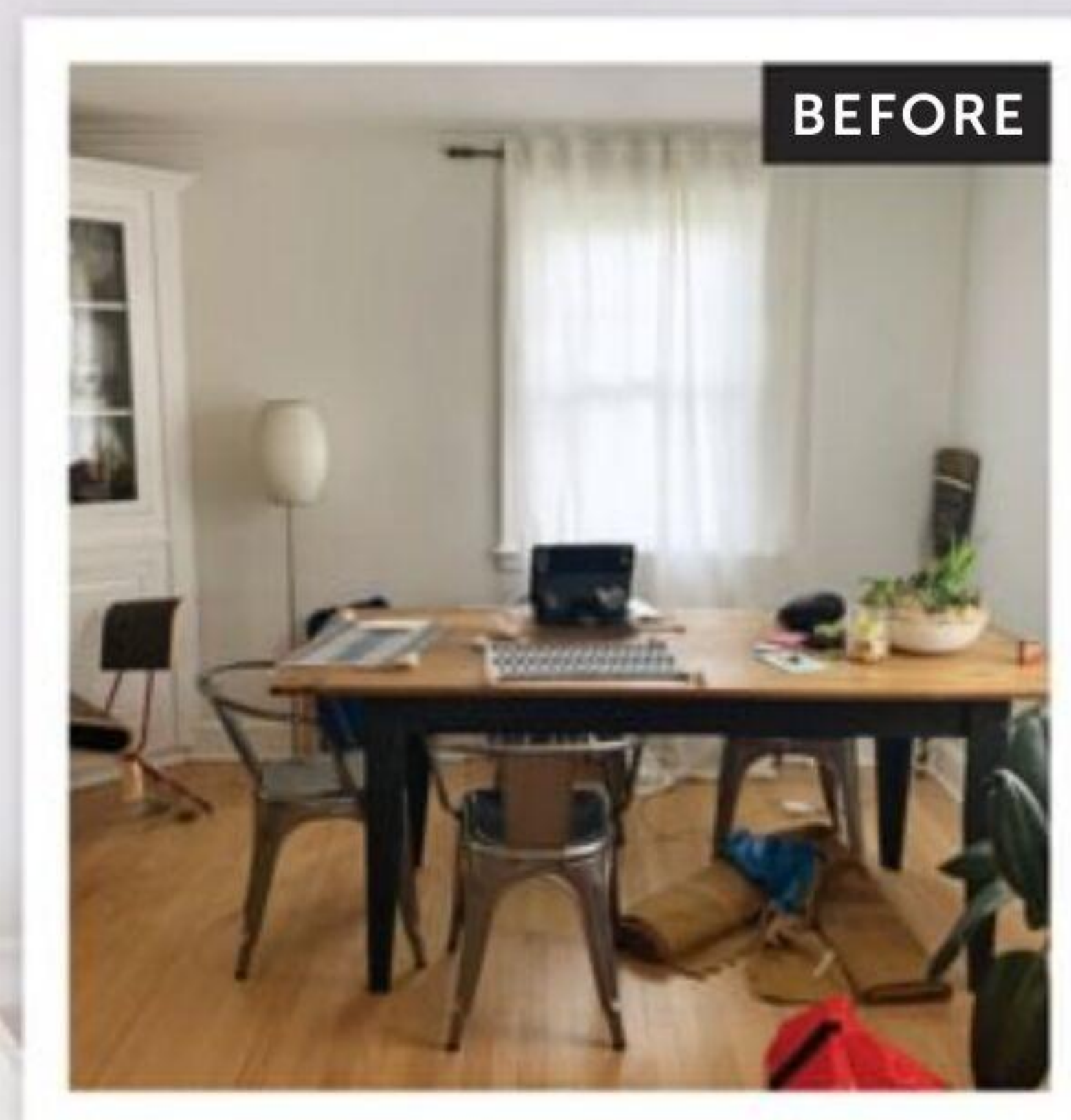


BATHROOM Keyanna freshened the tile with tile paint and replaced the floral wallpaper with a coat of limewash. She updated the vanity with paint, new hardware and a faucet, and a marble remnant top. The sconces and mirror are a better size for the space.

PORCH After cleaning and power-washing this outdoor room, Keyanna asked her dad to build a swing. "It's one of those sentimental things that makes this rental feel like home," she says.



DINING ROOM Desert colors of pink, orange, rust, and navy—including wallpaper (Kazi in Peach from Forbes + Masters; mitchellblack.com) and new paint on the hutch—lend warmth to the reimagined space. Homeowner Angela Belt swapped a long table for a round tulip-base option nestled into a corner banquette. The bench has storage and wears performance velvet. “It makes the space feel like a restaurant,” she says. Nubby throw pillows and a linen pendant from Room & Board soften the room even further. The Society6 artwork is from Black artist ThingDesign.



ASSATA PLATES
AND SILVERWARE
FROM KULTURED
KITCHENS AND
PILLOWS FROM
LEILON HOME ADD
PERSONALITY TO
THIS NOOK.



bold VISION

With a penchant for bright design and making spaces her own, an interior designer creates a personal sanctuary for her family that celebrates creativity.

WRITER **MALLORY ABREU** PHOTOGRAPHER **DAVID LAND** STYLIST **RAINA KATTLESON**



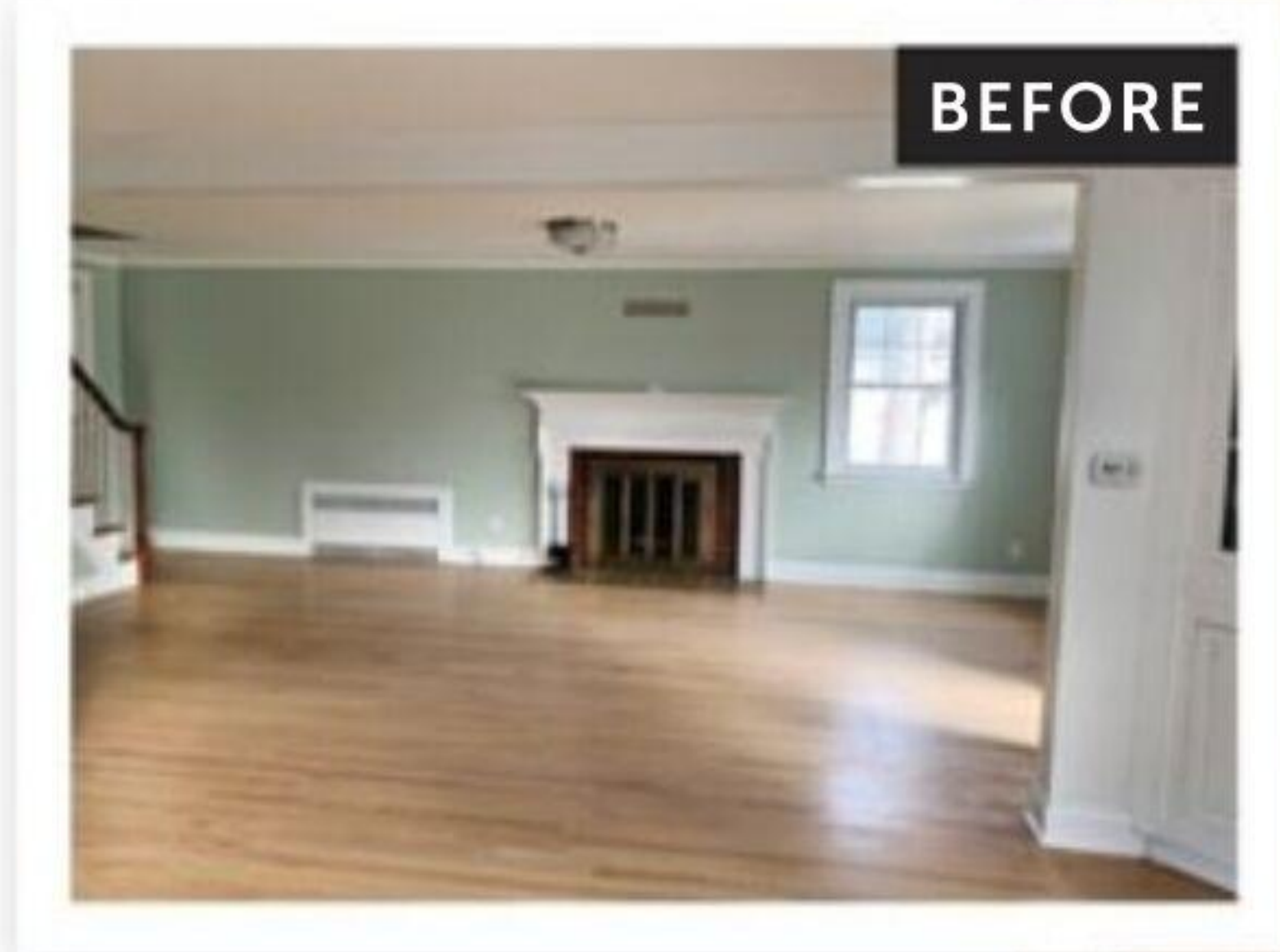
LIVING ROOM Angela, shown here with her late husband Leon, daughter Brooklyn, and son Quincy, used her home as a blank canvas to create comfortable yet eye-catching spaces. The sectional sofa from Apt2B in Baltic adds just the right amount of cozy and cool to the living room. The interior designer recently opened a new office in collaboration with Hartford Architecture Partners, Inc., to bring a similar modern-yet-friendly style to her clients.

A LOVE FOR FUN

patterns and quirky architecture had interior designer Angela Belt wanting more style than an apartment could provide. So when a 1939 Colonial in West Hartford, Connecticut, went on the market, she scooped it up. “I could finally invest like I never had before,” she says.

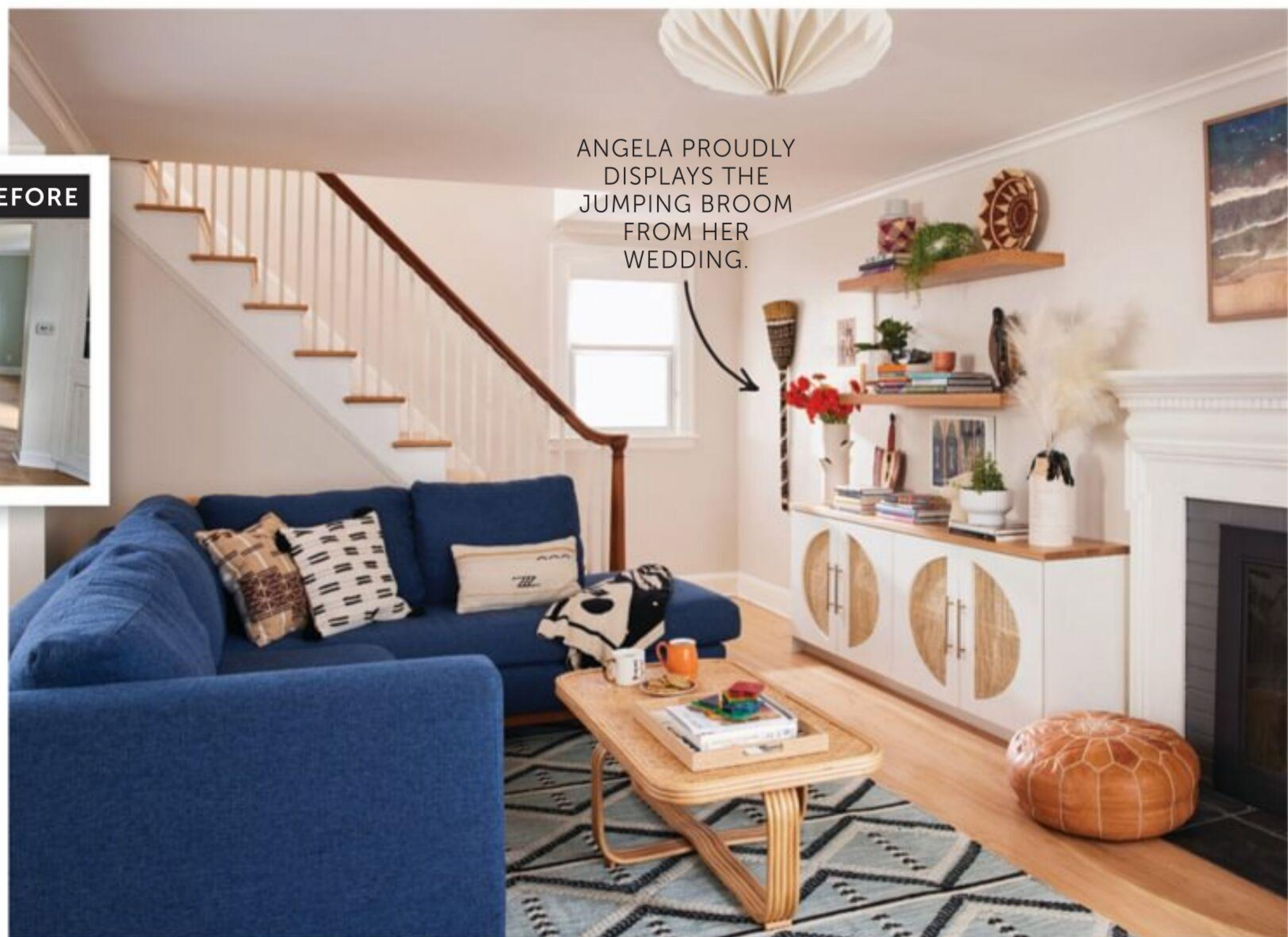
Angela started with light renovations, decorating room by room to create comfortable, personal spaces that reflect her family. The result? A home that champions Angela’s mission to elevate others. “Black people make up less than 5 percent of the interior designer demographic,” she says. “In my work and home I want to make sure those people are seen.” If she has an opportunity to use work by a person of color in her projects, she will. For pillows, wallpaper, and other home decor items, she goes to Aphrochic (aphrochic.com), a shop that blends bold color and global style and was created by her sister, Jeanine Hays, and her husband, Bryan Mason. For accessories, she turns to Reflektion Design (reflektiondesign.com), a brand that works with artisans in Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda to create one-of-a-kind items like baskets, fans, and pillow covers.

As Angela moved throughout her home, she swapped blank gray walls and uninspiring decor for energizing alternatives. “I wanted each room to nurture the people spending time in them,” Angela says. In the primary bedroom, she created a “me space” to creatively inspire herself. Earthy contrasting colors, personal collections, and smart storage blend in each room to both soothe and energize. “It’s important to me to have space to decompress,” she says. Comfort and beauty unite here.



BEFORE

LIVING ROOM Angela used a sectional sofa and area rug to create an intimate seating area in the long living space. She shopped Reflektion Design for woven fans and found the minimalist head sculpture from Effortless Composition.



ANGELA PROUDLY DISPLAYS THE JUMPING BROOM FROM HER WEDDING.



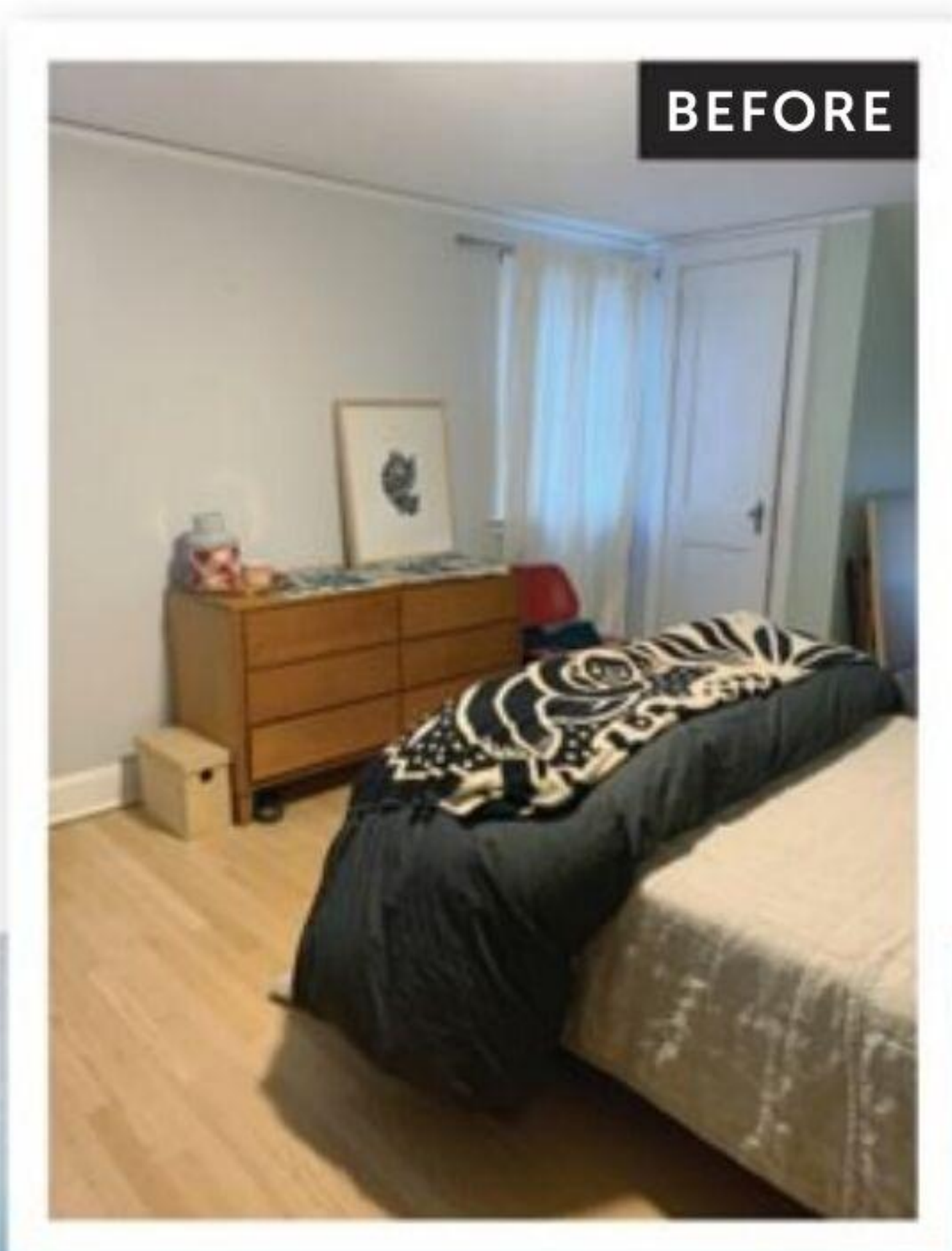
BEFORE

KITCHEN "When we first moved in, I had the urge to gut the kitchen area," Angela says. "But everyone who visited loved the kitchen, and I started to see the problem was in my head." The island already comfortably fit the whole family, and appliances had been updated by the previous owner. But details—hardware, recessed lighting, and a lack of window treatments—did need fixing. She swapped can lights for matte gray Lumens pendants over the island, updated the back door with a coat of Meet Cute from Clare Paint, and brought in hits of color with Smeg countertop appliances. The pattern on the window panel, designed by Sheila Bridges for The Shade Store, mimics the soft tile color in the backsplash.



DISPLAY SHELVES

"I was most excited about all the custom millwork we got to do," Angela says. She wanted a console that would hide the radiators and corral tech, so she worked with her carpenter to design built-ins with movable interior shelves and holes for wires. The structure is radiator-safe, with breathable caning on the doors.



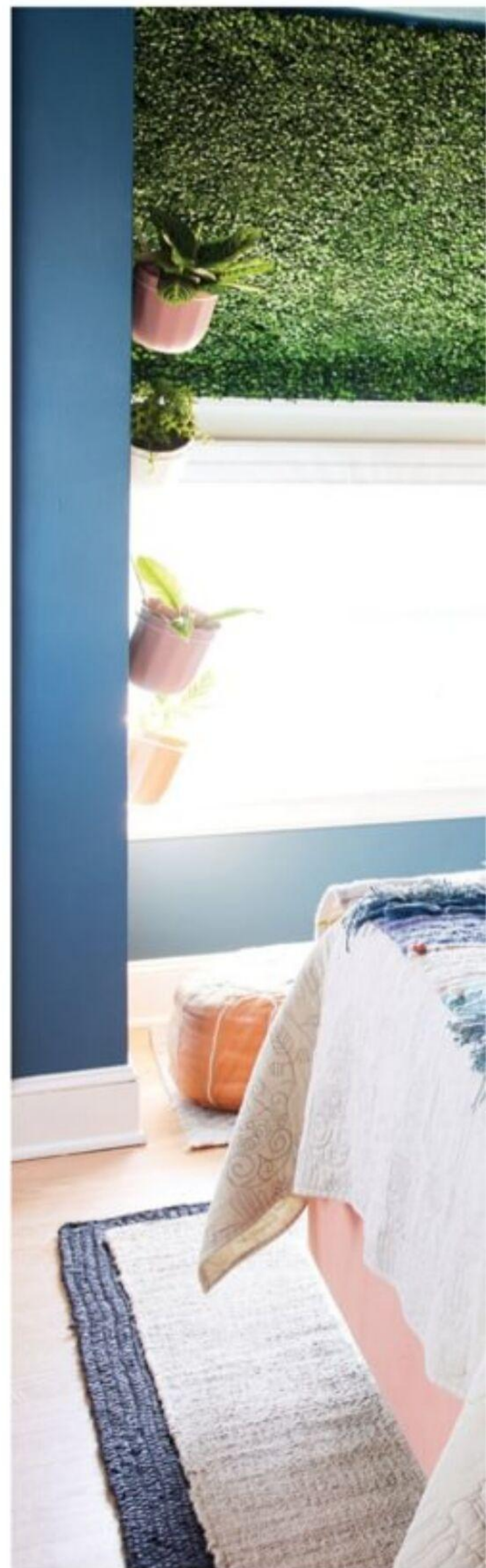
BEFORE

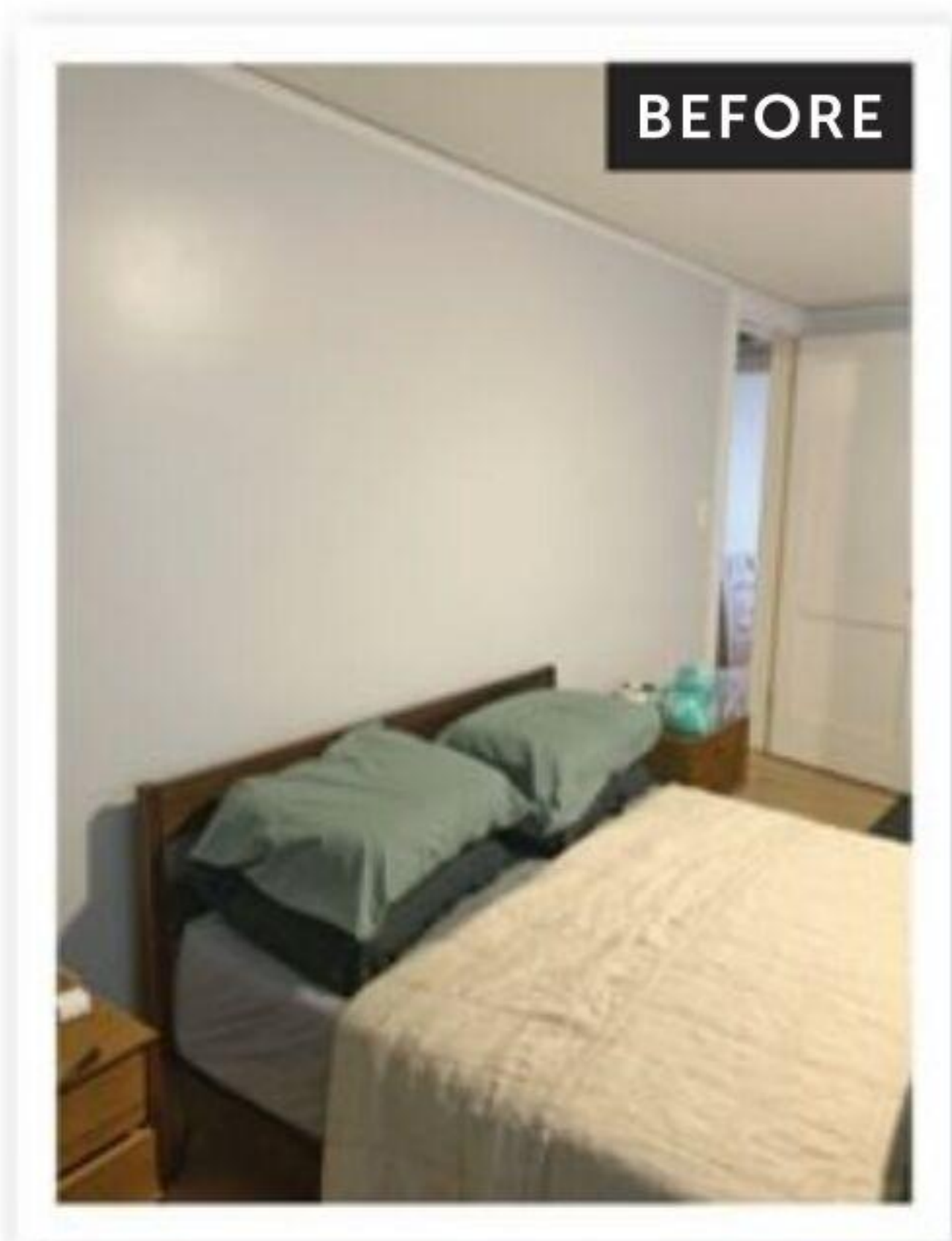
GALLERY WALL The credenza, which has moved with Angela for more than 10 years, became an anchor point for a mix of prints by Black artists (sold through Society6) and keepsakes, like a blue dish she found during her honeymoon in Paris.



PRIMARY BEDROOM

Angela built the decor around the Lulu and Georgia headboard. Contrasting the coral with blue Orange Grove wallpaper from Anthropologie makes each color look more saturated. A petite window nook turned into a meditation zone "to ground myself and clear my mind," she says. The faux-grass ceiling and hanging plants bring natural elements to the area.





BEFORE

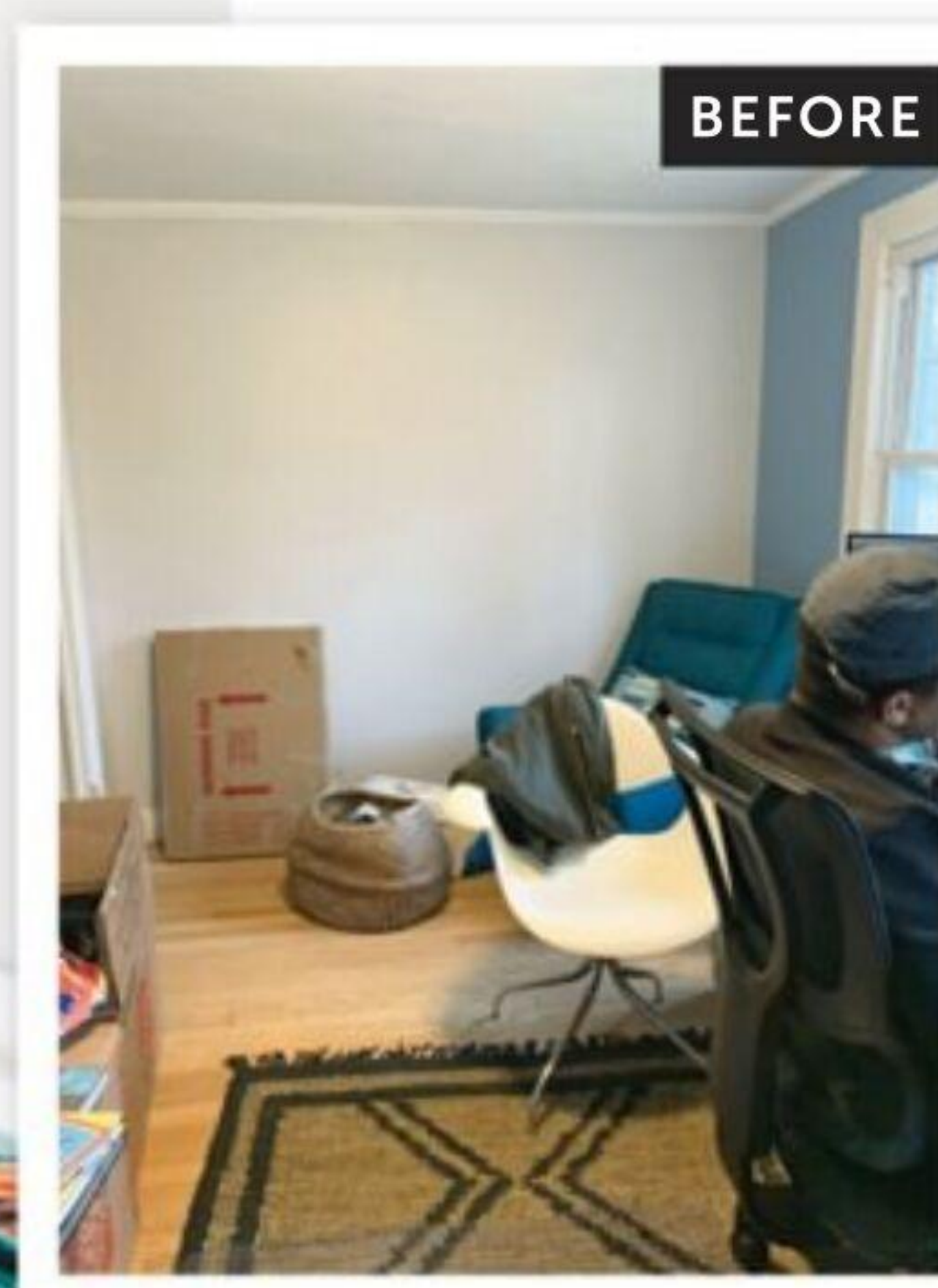


BATHROOM As the only working bath in the house, this space needed more storage. Angela added a medicine cabinet mirror from the BHG Collection at Walmart and a vanity sink with drawers. A shelf adds a towel bar and room for SampleHAUS bowls to hold cosmetics. The green walls (OMGreen from Clare Paint) are “rich in color and don’t make the little bath feel small,” Angela says.





■ **OFFICE** Dark paint adds a moodiness that doesn't distract. "Charcoal isn't as deep as black, so it allows light to reflect in the room," says Angela, who chose Benjamin Moore Soot. She found the sofa from one of her favorite Black-owned businesses, called Albany Park. "I loved the pattern and used it as a base to pull other colors out in the room," she says. Floating wall shelves free up floor space.





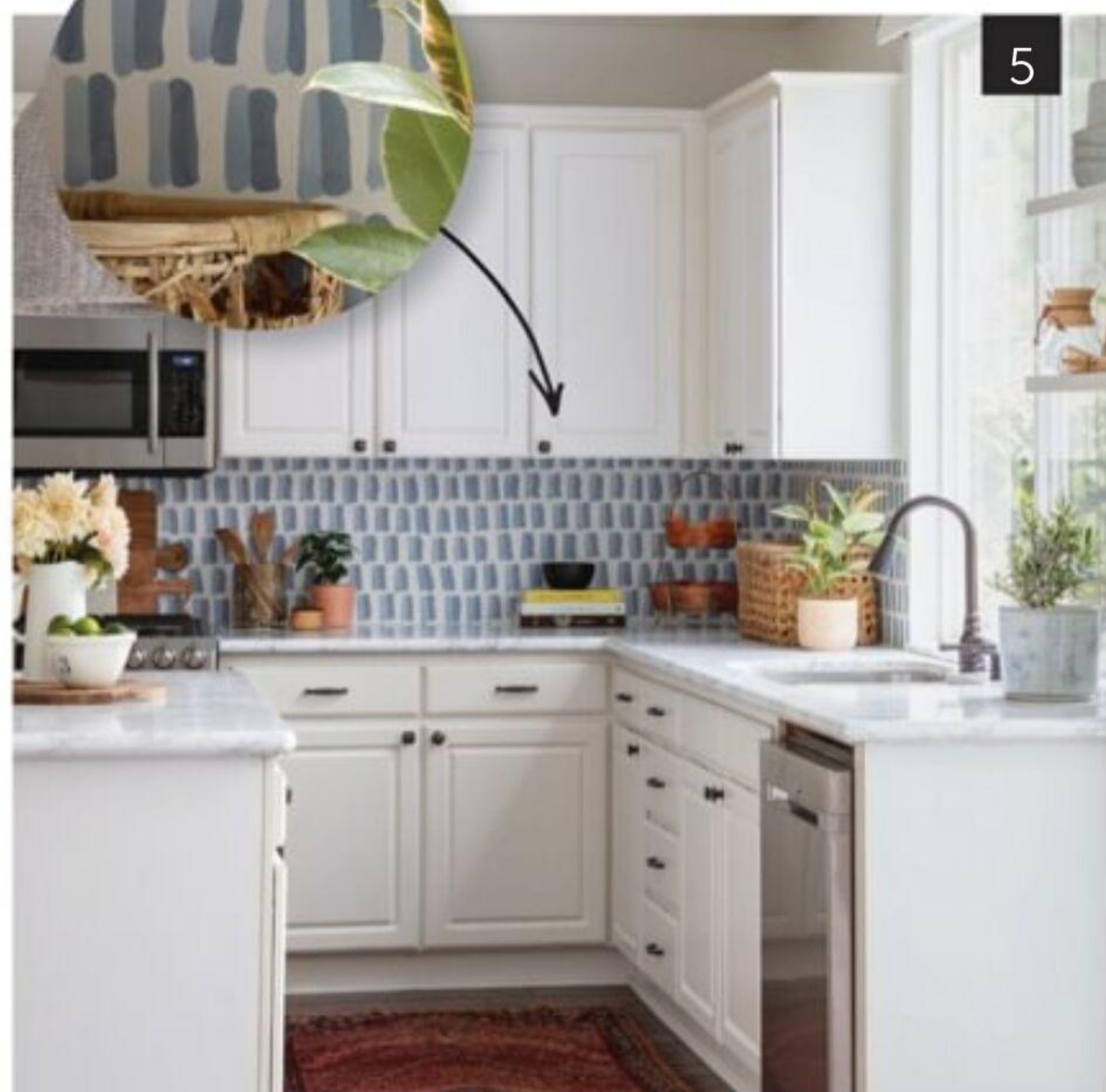
5

kitchen RENOVATIONS

■ **1. IN THE DETAILS** To infuse interest and texture into their all-white space, homeowners Jarrod and Stacy Allen added butcher-block countertops, shiplap, and gold accents.

A SPLASH OF COLOR, UPDATED HARDWARE, AND EXTRA STORAGE CAN INJECT NEW LIFE INTO YOUR COOKING COMMAND CENTER WITHOUT BREAKING THE BUDGET.

WRITER **EMILY CARREON**



2. BOLD BLUE The rich hue of the lower cabinets (Benjamin Moore Bedford Blue) in stylist Katie Leporte's kitchen anchors the space and extends the color scheme from the nearby entry. **3. TAKE A SEAT** Blogger Kelly Hartley saved space around her table and added extra seating by building a 7-foot-long bench. Bonus: It contains storage. **4. ON DISPLAY** Homeowner Christina Garay added open shelves to her island to show off her most-prized serving pieces. **5. BUDGET-FRIENDLY FLARE** For a quick refresh, Anita and Travis Yokota chose a graphic wallpaper as a backsplash (Double Dash in Rain from Rebecca Atwood) and covered dark granite countertops with durable marble-look contact paper.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE) LAUREY GLENN, (TOP LEFT) JASON DONNELLY, (TOP RIGHT) HELEN NORMAN, (BOTTOM LEFT) EDMUND BARR



homecoming REIMAGINED



DEN Designer Dustin Dorr turned the formal dining room into a den where he and his wife, Sarah James, watch TV and play card games with their kids, Anders and Malou, *above*. “It’s our most comfortable, most used space,” he says. “I like that it’s cozy and close to the kitchen.”

A move back to this interior designer’s Oklahoma hometown welcomed a new era for a 1918 house. Traditional details provided a just-right canvas for bold color and eclectic finds.

WRITER **JODY GARLOCK**
PHOTOGRAPHER **HECTOR SANCHEZ**
STYLIST **PAIGE MULLINS**
FIELD EDITOR **SARAH ALBA**

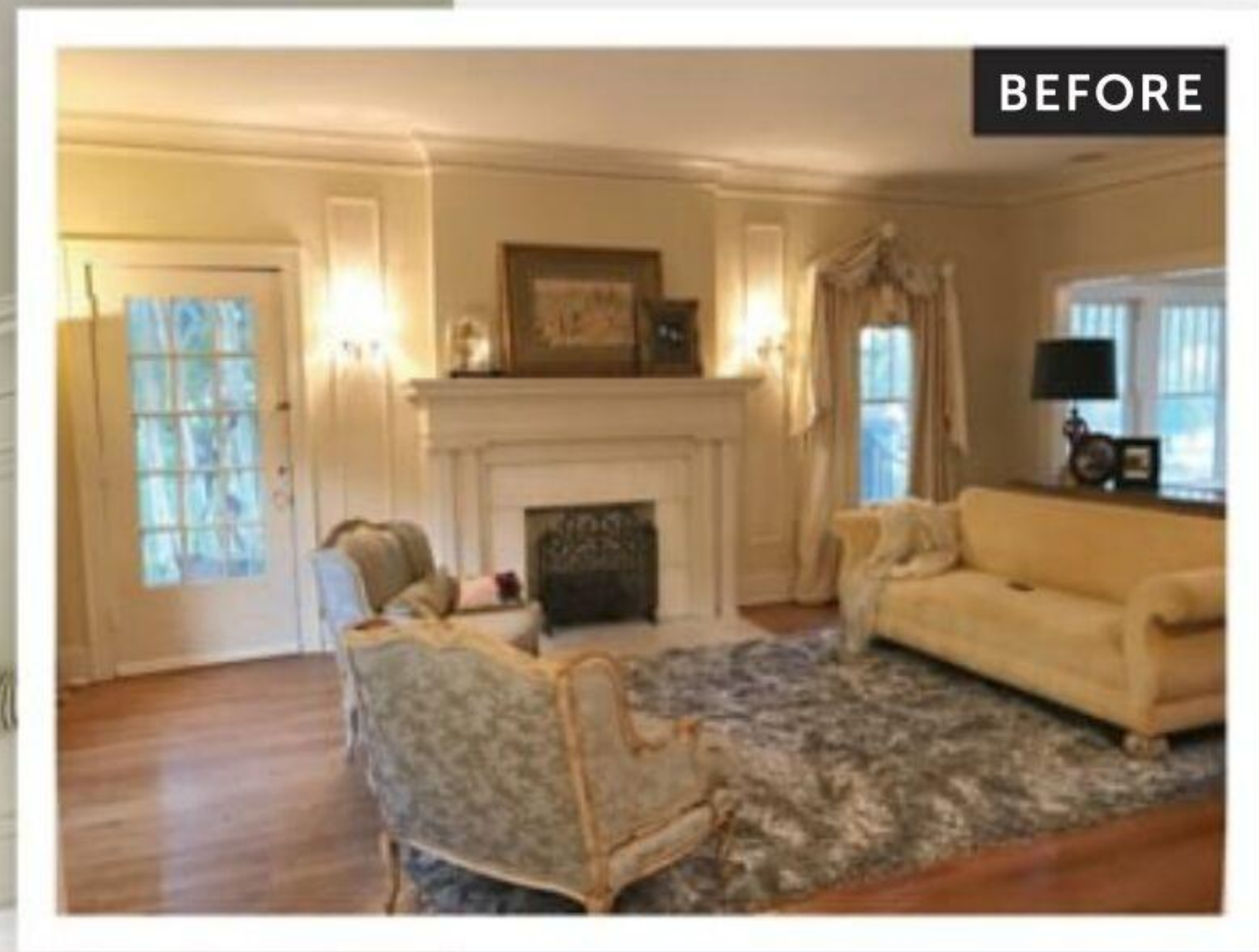
AFTER 21 YEARS AWAY,

Dustin Dorr and Sarah James returned to their hometown of Oklahoma City. They felt pulled back to raise their kids close to family, yet they weren’t looking to re-create their own childhoods. “We wanted to experience this city as a whole new place rather than the place we grew up,” Dustin says.

They eventually found an old house with a stucco exterior and Spanish architectural influences that reminded them of homes in Southern California, where they last lived, and Santa Fe, a favorite place to visit. The dated interior didn’t faze Dustin, who knew he could flip the script. “I’m kind of pushing the boundaries and making this house ours—creating something that reflects us and where we’ve been,” he says.

Dustin’s first love is midcentury modern, but he says, “That alone is overdone and boring.” So he sprinkles in flea market finds, formal antiques, and new pieces. But first he simplified the backdrops and surfaces. “When you neutralize,” he says, “new, old, and everything in between work well together.” He didn’t take things too far, though, to keep the home’s historical integrity. “It feels correct, yet up-to-date and fitting for our life.”

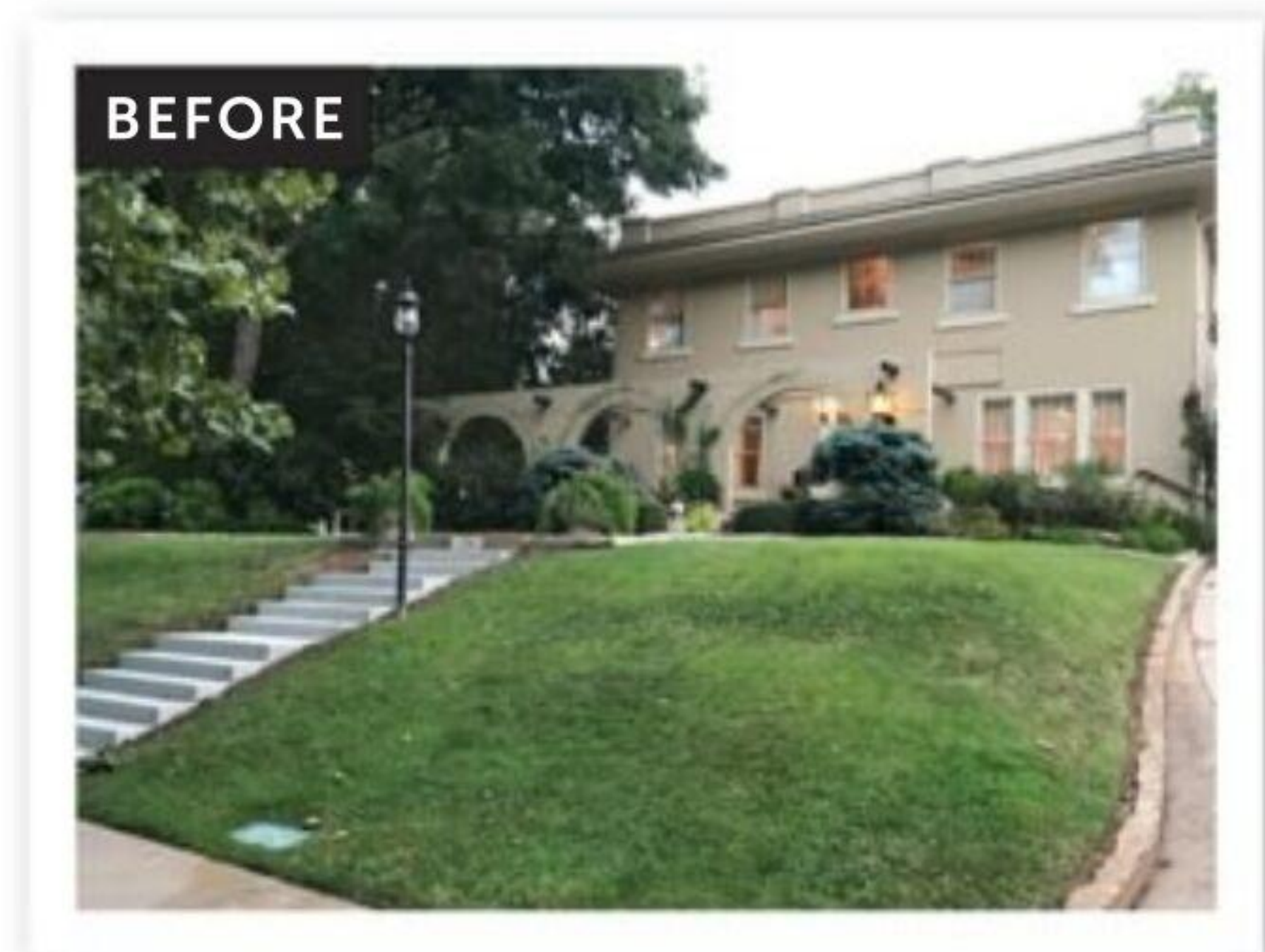
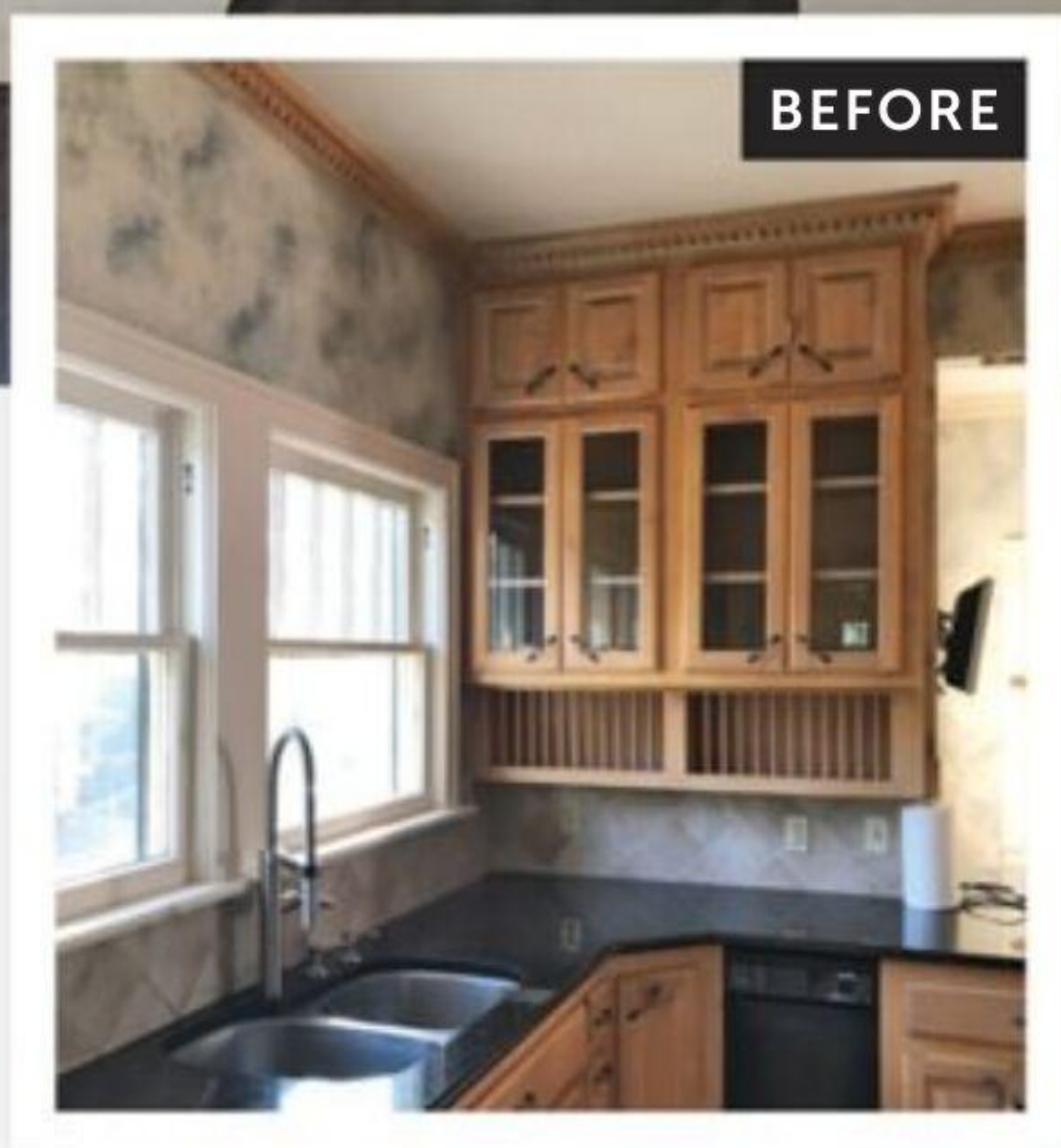




LIVING ROOM "I think about backgrounds first," Dustin says. "I like to white out things so the focus is on the art and objects." He painted crown molding the same white as the walls to downplay the traditional millwork. It gives the living room an updated look, as does the dark gray door paint, sashes, and mantel. A hand-rubbed aging solution gives the brass curtain rods a dark, always-been-there look. Two sitting areas—one set off by the rug and the other along the window—make efficient use of the long space.



KITCHEN Grayish green cabinets counterbalance a pink backsplash and checkerboard floor in the small space. “We really went for it on the floor and backsplash—those were risks for us,” Dustin says. Both the checkerboard pattern and the hex tile have traditional references, but the larger scale updates the look. Shelves replaced boxy upper cabinets to help modernize and visually open the room. The dentil molding, a holdover from a previous owner’s remodel, nods to the home’s traditional styling. A midcentury tulip table base topped with a new piece of marble fills the breakfast nook, *opposite*. “It’s a small space, but it has a great feel,” he says.



EXTERIOR In a bit of a rebel move, Dustin replaced the grass lawn with a xeriscape garden of stones and drought-tolerant plants that will survive an Oklahoma winter. “It’s going against our rolling green lawns here, but it piques people’s interest,” he says. He retained the trees that keep the house rooted in tradition. “We have giant pecan trees and blue atlas cedar mixed with yucca and cacti,” he says. “The unexpected mix is key.” A bold blue color on the front door “prepares visitors for what to expect inside,” Dustin says.



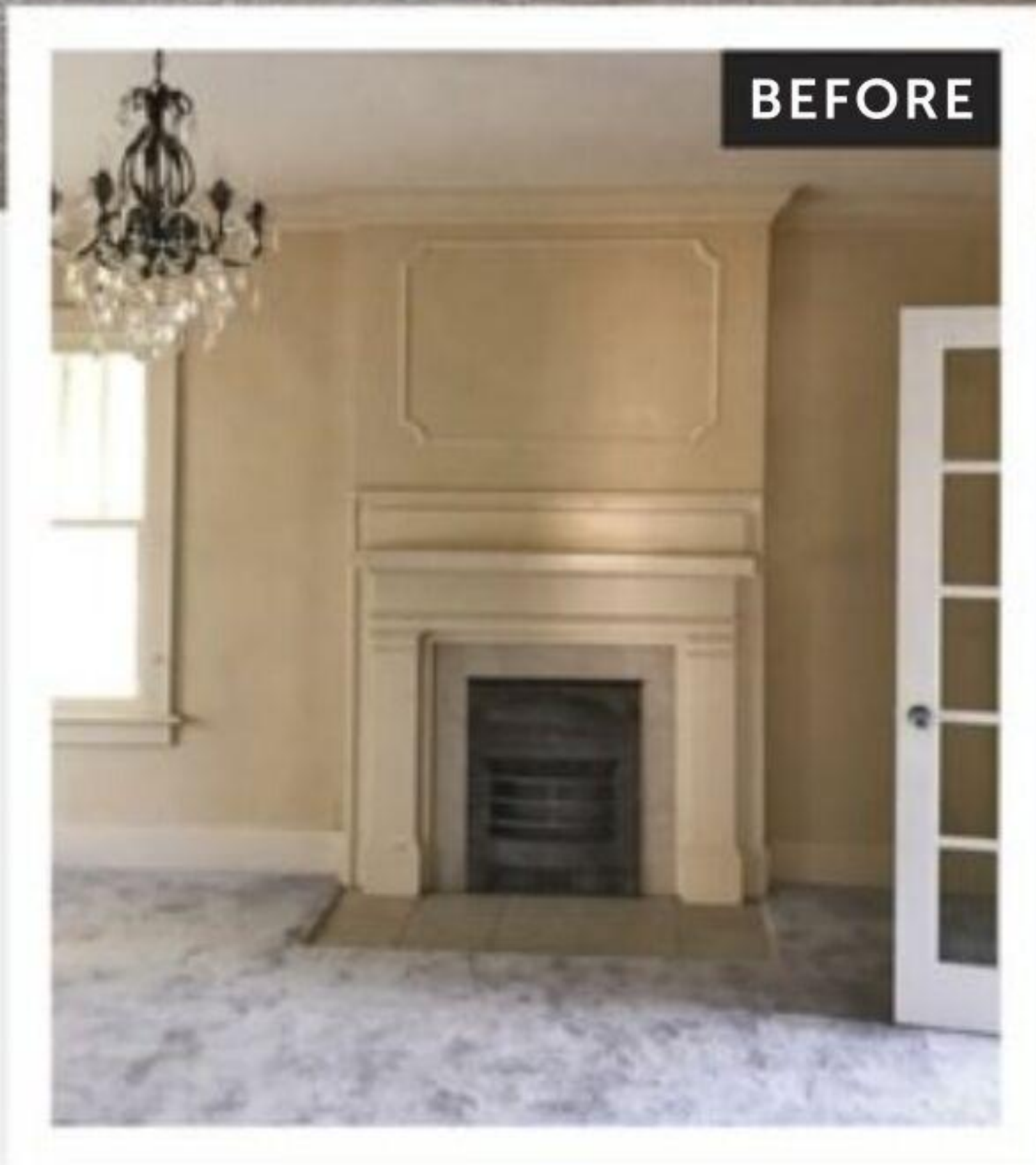






PRIMARY BEDROOM “We feel lucky,” Dustin says of having a bedroom fireplace. To mimic the look of the one in the living room, he replaced the tile surround with white marble and painted the rest of it a blackish gray. His usual rule of thumb next to the bed—use matching lamps with mismatched nightstands or vice versa—went to the wayside. Here, he went mismatched for both and used old chests as night tables. Just one window treatment panel—a natural linen pleated curtain—hangs on the outer side of each window to streamline the look. Dustin restored the oak flooring under the carpet and swapped one vintage hanging light for another to bring in some quirk.

DUSTIN CHOSE AN OLD-SCHOOL REDDISH MARBLE VANITY TOP AS A SURPRISE—“LIKE IT COULD HAVE BEEN HERE THE WHOLE TIME,” HE SAYS.



BEFORE

BATHROOM The vintage desk acts as Sarah’s vanity and is where she records videos for her beauty blog, *Whoorl*. Dustin had the wall behind it plumbed for a possible future tub. Shiplap hides some of the old home’s settling issues by evening out where the ceiling meets the wall—a less invasive option than tearing out the ceiling. “It makes the room almost go a little beachy, which tells a little bit of our story too,” Dustin says.



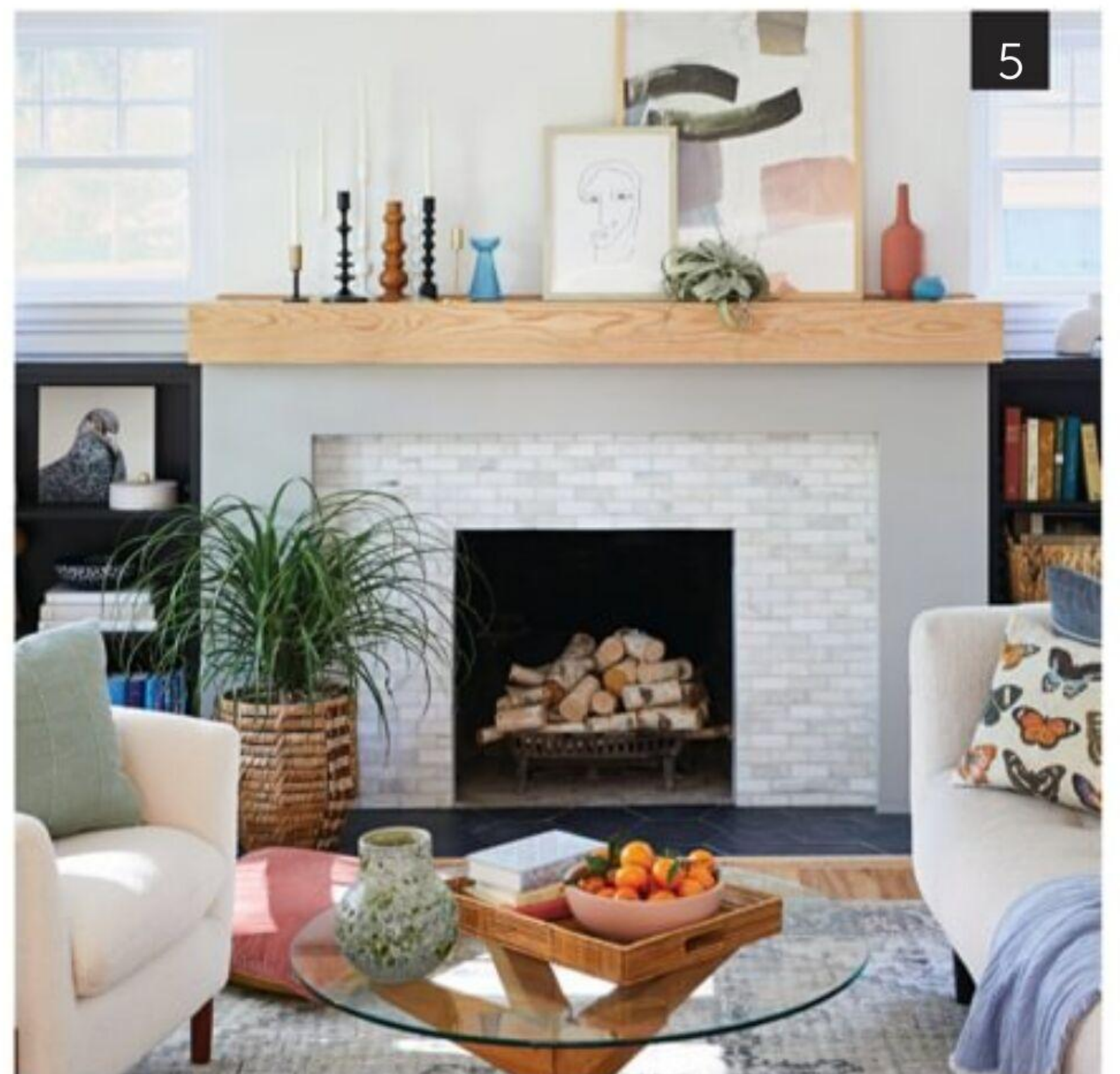
5 *living room* REVAMPS



■ **1. SHELF IMAGE** To take advantage of a 20-foot ceiling, homeowner Alex Mazhukin created built-ins with a mix of cabinets, drawers, and open shelves to frame the TV.

WOOD ACCENTS, BOLD COLOR PALETTES, AND REFRESHED FOCAL POINTS CAN MAKE A WELL-LOVED LIVING SPACE FEEL RENEWED.

WRITER **EMILY CARREON**



2. IN HARMONY The repetition of a caramel color in the wood beams, door, and furnishings infuses Rosa Beltran-Francis' space with warmth and charm. **3. BRIGHT PALETTE** A vibrant rug sets the stage for homeowner Ashley Wilson's playful color palette. Blush curtains, rainbow artwork, and pastel decor tie it together. **4. GREEN GLOW** Blogger Ashley Mayes chose deep green walls (a custom mix of Fig Tree by Behr with two shots of black) to complement the rich wood and leather accents in her family's living room. **5. FRESH FOCUS** Make over a dated fireplace to create a light, contemporary focal point. Here, white brick was replaced with a new tile surround, hexagon floor tile, and an oak mantel.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE AND TOP RIGHT) ADAM ALBRIGHT, (TOP LEFT) DAVID TSAY, (BOTTOM LEFT) JASON DONNELLY, (BOTTOM RIGHT) MARTY BALDWIN



realized POTENTIAL

What many saw as an impossible project, one couple viewed as a healthy challenge. After hours of peeling back wallpaper, repainting, and thoughtfully decorating, a 1930s home reclaimed its charm.

WRITER **PAIGE PORTER FISCHER**
PHOTOGRAPHER **BRIE WILLIAMS**
STYLIST **FRANCES BAILEY**



DINING ROOM Diana Mathews likes to call attention to the traditional details in her 1930s home while injecting contemporary touches for balance—like this light fixture, midcentury bar, and glass-top table. The dining chairs with upholstered seats belonged to her husband Phillip's great-great-grandmother; the others belonged to his mom. An original corner hutch and the trim were painted Sherwin-Williams Escape Gray—a few shades darker than the walls in Sherwin-Williams Spare White.



BEFORE



EXTERIOR Diana, Phillip, and their daughter, Evelyn, stand at the original arched entrance to their house. Massive stumps and weeds once obscured the brick pathways that wrap the home. “Vines had utterly eaten the wood picket fences that run between the brick columns by the gate,” Diana says.

FAMOUS OR INFAMOUS?

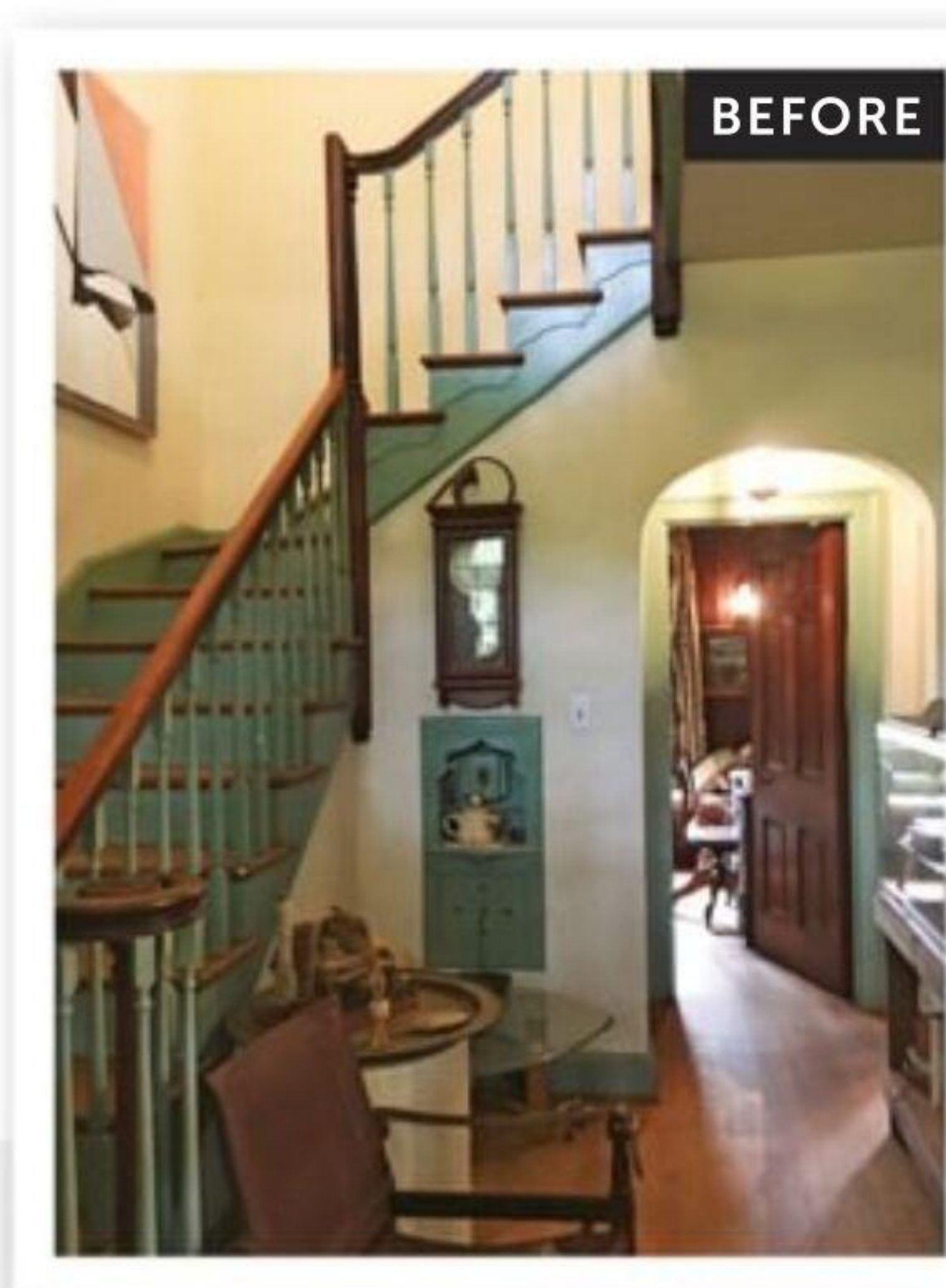
By the time they toured it, designer Diana Mathews and her husband, chef Phillip Perrow, were already well aware of “The Secret Garden House.” Diana says, “The listing was so wild, the photos so crazy, that most people were probably terrified to go see it.” She and Phillip were nursing the wounds of yet another house lost to a bidding war and decided a “just-for-kicks” walk-through could be the perfect antidote for their disappointment. “We thought it would make for a good story. Little did we know it would become our story.”

The 1930 brick house in Richmond, Virginia, featured a large brick wall around what was once presumably a lush, alluring garden. The yard had become a forest of weeds and unrelenting vines. “We wandered around the property, walked through the house, and fell completely dumbstruck in love with a money pit,” Diana recalls. “We both knew this place would require so much love, but we saw past all the layers and totally envisioned our future here.”

Returning the house to its original state meant peeling back those unfortunate elements. “We were stripping, stripping, stripping,” she says. “I quit counting the layers of wallpaper we removed from walls and ceilings or the sheets of linoleum we peeled off the floors. Phillip and I refinished all the floors and painted everything ourselves.”

Once they had a clean slate, the couple slowly began to embellish the bare bones of the traditional house with their eclectic sensibility. “If you asked me what my style was, I’d say ‘sentimental,’” says Diana, who once owned a vintage resale shop and specialized in midcentury modern furniture. “We’ve collected midcentury pieces that we love, inherited antiques that have emotional value to us, and own art that spans various eras. Those were the treasures that drove this design.”

Marrying elements from different places and periods gives a home a certain unmatched style—something that’s become increasingly difficult to pull off in an “everything is shoppable” Instagram world, Diana says. “I believe that if you know what you love, and you hold onto pieces that you love, they will always make you happy, and your home will be full of character. If you design based only on trends, you move on when the trends change because you have no emotional attachment to what you’re living with.”



ENTRY In the stripped, repainted stairwell Diana's gallery wall includes a few of her own paintings, some created by friends, and a special landscape series by Phillip's grandfather.

SEATING AREA Diana's great-great-great-grandmother's quilt hangs behind treasured midcentury-style chairs in the living room. "The quilt is one of my most prized possessions," she says.

Because of the home's traditional layout, each room is independent rather than open—a separation of spaces that the couple enjoys. Though Diana loves that each room tells its own story, she did want to create visual continuity. So she used color to transition from one space to the next, repeating shades of earthy greens for synthesis. "I love any and every shade of green," she says. "Because I've always been drawn to that color tone, it's possible for me to move things around, to shop from my own house, because that color thread is like my second language. It's everywhere here."

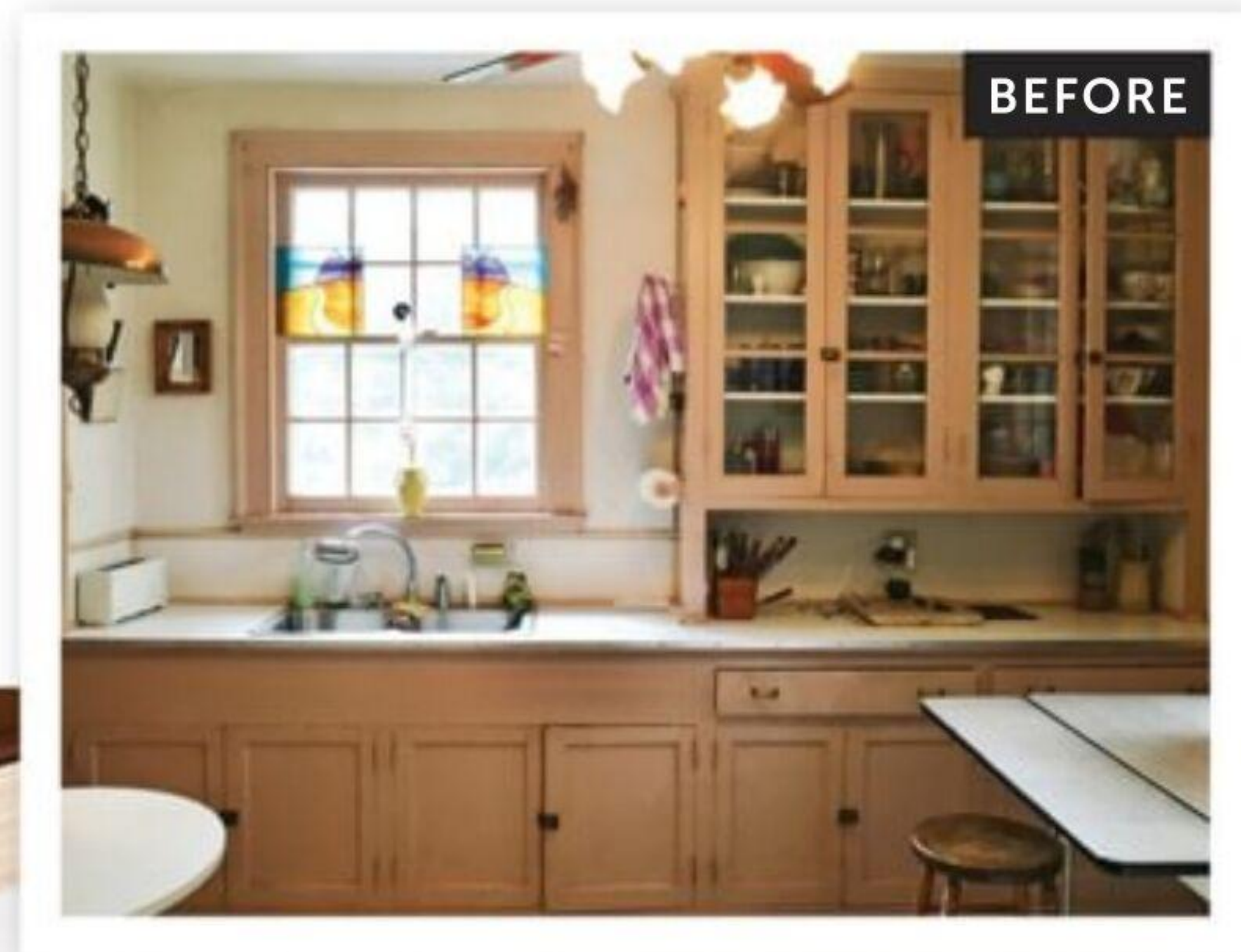
As much as she's drawn to old houses and their distinct personalities, Diana didn't want an ornate, traditional house that felt like a stuffy antiques store. "We are a young family who likes old things. But I'm here to tell you, your grandmother's chair can get new, quirky upholstery and represent your taste, while the form still reminds you of her," she says. "Part of the fun of decorating with older things is that you have a chance to reinvent them or pair them with something unexpected. I don't care much about having possessions worth lots of money. I want to surround my family with things that make our hearts beat because they tell our story."



"EVERYTHING IN OUR HOUSE HAS A STORY
TO TELL. I BELIEVE A HOUSE FEELS MORE LIKE
A HOME WHEN IT'S FULL OF STORIES."

DIANA MATHEWS





■ **LIVING ROOM** One of their you-had-me-at-hello elements was the original, untouched millwork in the living room. Even before closing, the sellers gave Diana and Phillip permission to invest sweat equity, which included removing layers of paint and repairing windowpanes. "It was a lot of work for a leap of faith," Diana says.

■ **KITCHEN** This was the one room that warranted a complete remodel. Phillip, a chef, wanted the room to feel more welcoming than utilitarian, so he asked Diana if she'd forgo upper cabinets. "I was reluctant, but now I'm so glad we did that," she says. The couple incorporated antiques, hanging Phillip's great-great-grandmother's mirror on the wall and opting for an old workbench instead of a built-in island.



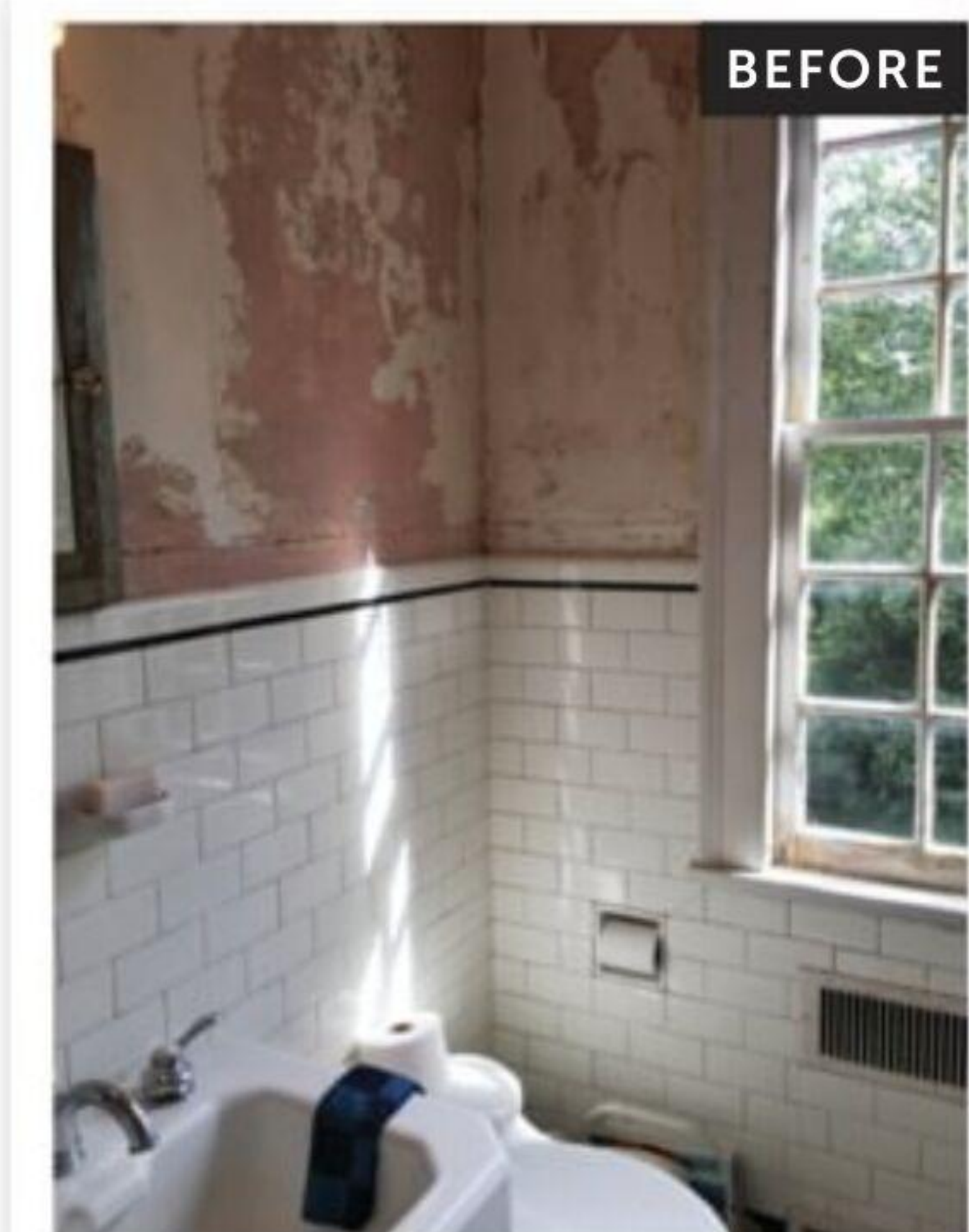
PATIO Diana outfitted this gathering spot with a full set of vintage spun-fiberglass lounge furniture found at The Salvation Army. A raspberry-color rug anchors the seating arrangement.

BATHROOMS Diana added colorful wallpaper—even around a mirror frame. The original 3x6-inch wall tiles stayed in the primary bathroom.

GUEST BEDROOM “The walls and ceilings are all painted this warm green, so you feel enveloped,” Diana says. The alabaster lamp lit the hallway of her childhood home, the side chair came from her family’s old river house nearby, and antique trays on the wall served food at the couple’s wedding reception. The tiger maple four-poster, owned by Phillip’s great-great-great-great-grandfather, was made before the Civil War.

“I’M A SUCKER FOR GREEN. I’M DRAWN TO GRAYS WITH GREEN TONES AND ALL THOSE FROM NATURE—MOSS, SAGE, PINE.”

DIANA MATHEWS



BEFORE

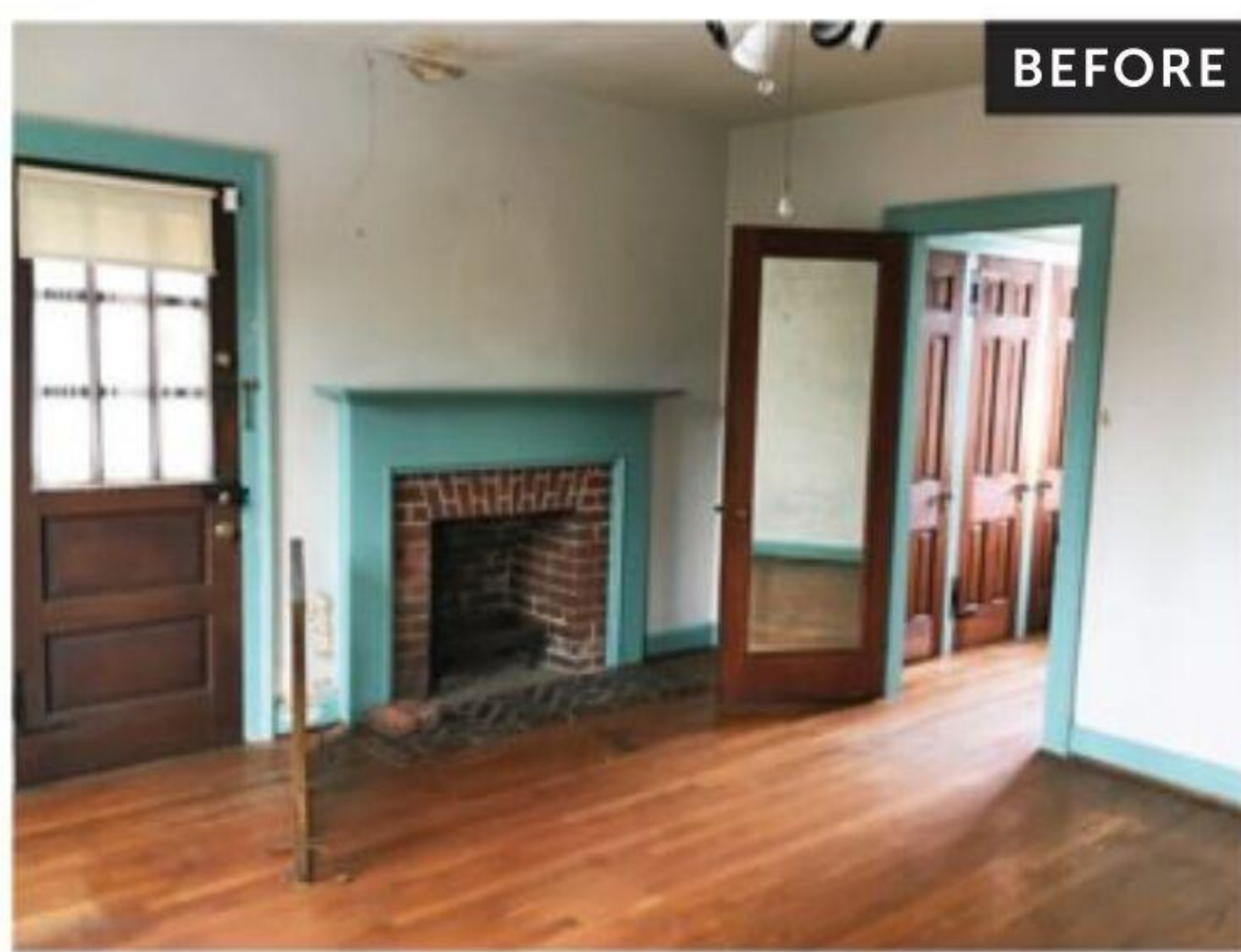




PRIMARY BEDROOM A landscape painting by Phillip's grandfather hangs above the nonworking fireplace, which Diana filled with various potted plants. She kept the bedding simple—an ochre canvas throw over a white coverlet—and played to the muted, woodsy palette in the geometric rug.



DAUGHTER'S BATHROOM "So much of the house was pink—a terrible pink—that my mom couldn't believe we would consider the color for any room at all," Diana says. But she chose a pale shade for her daughter's bath and spruced up the space with a new light fixture and brass faucet. The same 3x6-inch bath wall tiles that appear in the primary bathroom stayed here too.



5

bedroom REDOS

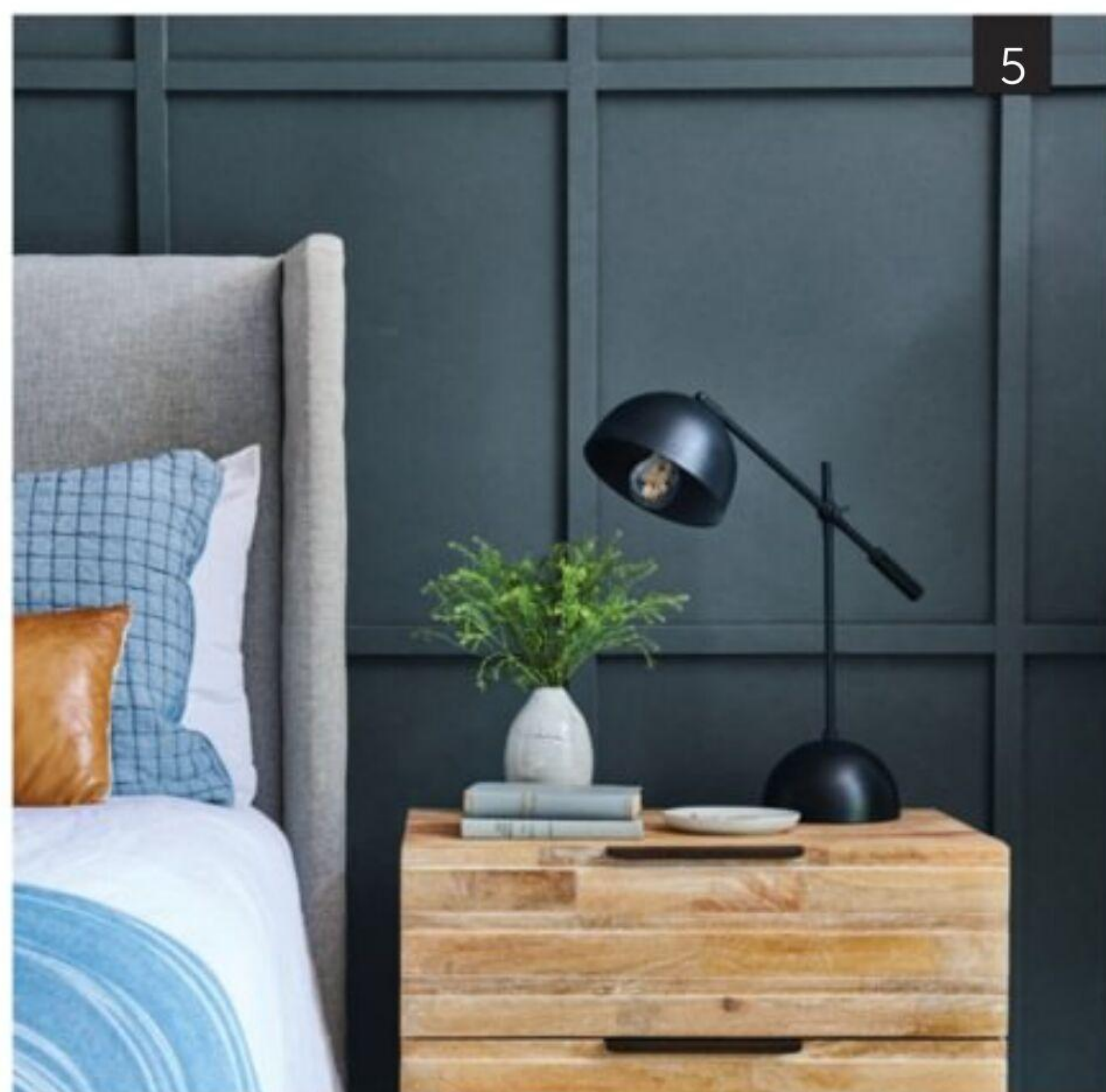


1. CHILL ZZZONE

Neutral tones and soft details in the headboard, bench, and rug bring a relaxing atmosphere to interior decorator Cait Pappas' guest bedroom.

BLEND COMFORT, FUNCTIONALITY, AND CREATIVITY TO
TRANSFORM A PLAIN BEDROOM INTO A "ME" SPACE.

WRITER **EMILY CARREON**



2. SOFT FOCUS Paired with simple white bedding, a dark green velvet headboard and brass accents add a touch of luxurious contrast in homeowners Jeff and Catherine Whittaker's primary bedroom. **3. YOUTHFUL CHARACTER** Jenna and Lucas Leblanc used an accent wallpaper behind their kids' twin beds and a shared nightstand to create a focal point in the small bedroom. **4. DOUBLE THE FUN** In a small space, go up. A built-in DIY bunk bed—complete with a slide—in blogger Angela Rose's daughter's room has a play area on top and sleeping quarters below. **5. UNIQUELY HOMEMADE** In her own room, Angela installed this board-and-batten accent wall by first attaching a flat backer board to the wall and then applying 1x2 finger-joint pine in a grid pattern. Paint (Newburg Green from Benjamin Moore) unifies the build.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE) CARSON DOWNING, (TOP LEFT) BRIE WILLIAMS, (TOP RIGHT) HECTOR SANCHEZ, (BOTTOM LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT) JAY WILDE



DINING ROOM Ryan Rabuska and Jeff Pelletier's lakeside home, *opposite*, is a tribute to modern cottage style. The dining room captures the play of contrast with an industrial-look table topped with reclaimed wood that's flanked by modern white chairs and an 8-foot mirror. "I love that the mirror has traditional molding, but then it's painted black, so it makes it fresh and modern," Jeff says.

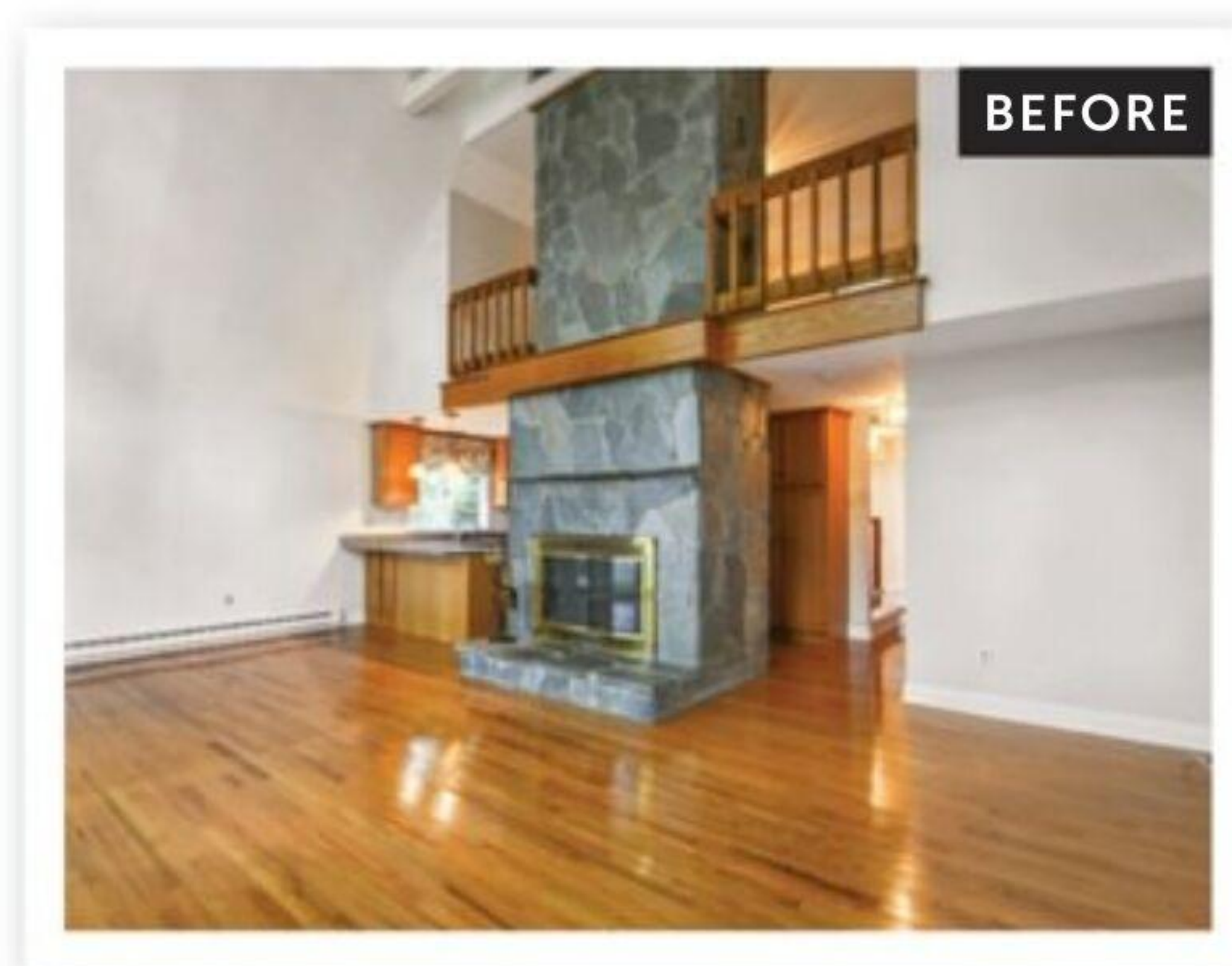
reimagined
RETREAT

A few architectural swaps and a fresh coat of paint
brightened up this couple's lakeside home.

WRITER **KELLY RYAN KEGANS** PHOTOGRAPHER **MATT DUTILE** PRODUCER **JENNIFER CONDON**



LIVING ROOM One of the initial elements that captured Ryan and Jeff's attention was the open floor plan. It was anchored by a two-story bluestone fireplace, which they sheetrocked and plastered over. "This way, the stone is preserved if we ever want it back or if we sell the home and the new owners want bluestone," Ryan says. White paint lightens and brightens the space, while shiplap installed on the ceiling emphasizes the soaring A-frame architecture. Glass railings make the loftlike primary suite feel even airier.



BEFORE

Ryan Rabuska has an eye for shapes and silhouettes. The interior designer enjoys nothing more than spying a sculptural table lamp sitting forlorn on a thrift shop shelf. “I love finding things people get rid of—things they don’t think are cool anymore,” he says. Almost as soon as he spots it, Ryan dreams up just the right paint color to give his found treasure a reimagined life.

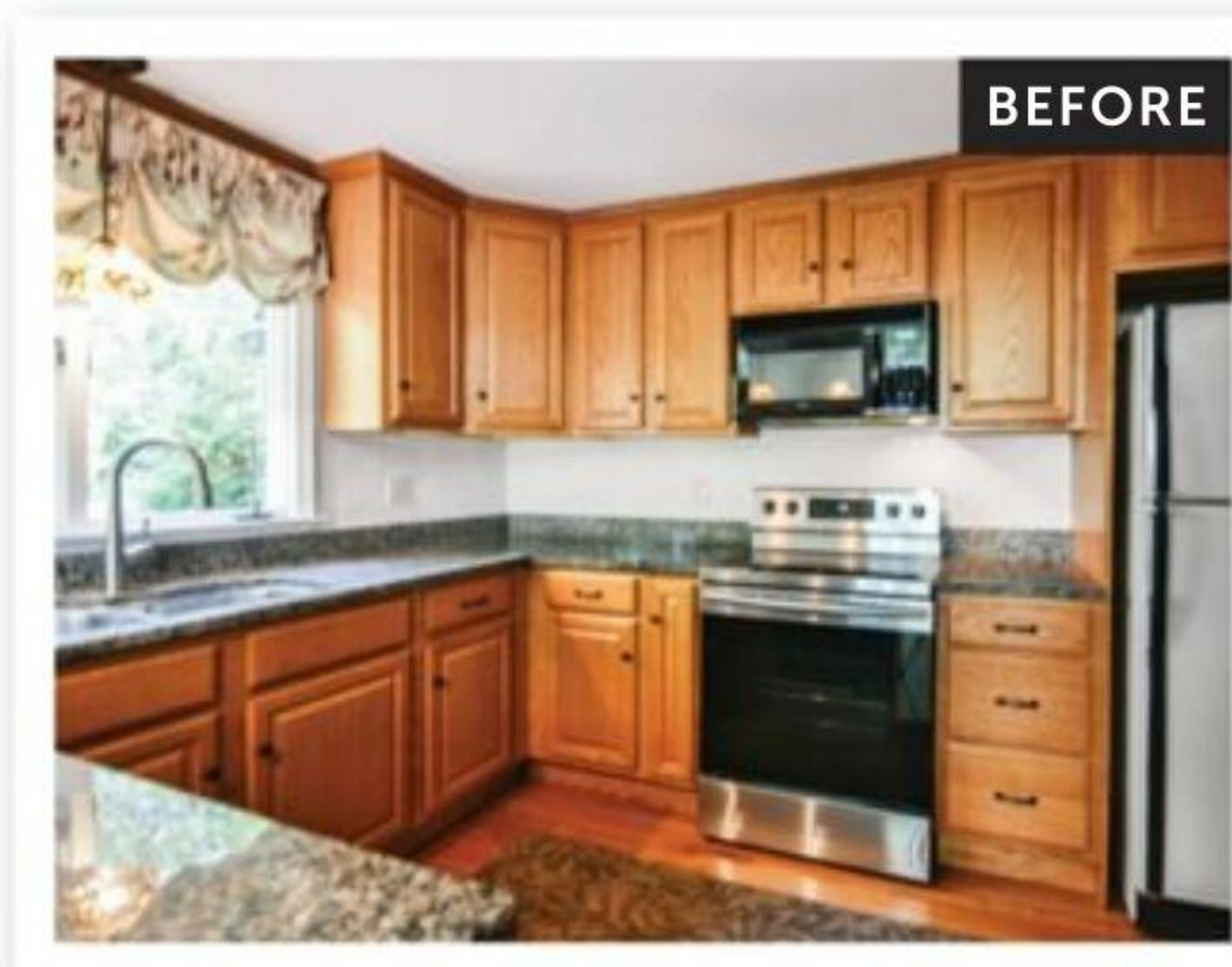
The familiar scenario played out on a much larger scale when he and his partner, Jeff Pelletier, snapped up a lakeside property in Wolcott, Connecticut. The couple were taken by the 1973 A-frame’s profile, its two-story wall of windows, and the fireplace that stretches to the peak of a vaulted 36-foot-tall ceiling. But they were less enamored with the exterior’s drab color scheme and dated interiors—a combo of wall-to-wall carpet in the common areas and dark bluestone that clad the fireplace and weighed down surrounding spaces. “It kind of reminded me of the Brady Bunch house,” says Jeff.

Undeterred, the experienced DIYers got to work on a punch list of upgrades that they unified with a palette of white and cream set off with crisp



FRONT ENTRY HALL

The couple created this niche by carving out space from the back of a closet. The wood shelves were made from the old railings and mantel they removed during the renovation. “There wasn’t room for a console table to drop your keys, so we decided to create this catchall space,” Ryan says. Arching the niche and doorway helps establish the cottage-inspired feel Ryan and Jeff admire.



BEFORE

contrasts of black and brown. As dramatic as the transformation is, there was one thing they didn’t change—the floor plan. “We loved the layout and wanted to stay true to that, so we didn’t move any walls,” Ryan says. Instead, they elevated the look with some clever, inexpensive moves, such as installing white shiplap on the great-room ceiling, painting the lower kitchen cabinets matte black, and adding warm but sophisticated wood accents, including shelves they made with boards salvaged during the renovation. The new floors look like oak hardwood but are actually luxury vinyl planks. “We have a dog and wanted it to be super durable,” Ryan says.

Their goal for the renovation was to create a modern lake cottage feel, reminiscent of the Cape Cod homes that have long inspired them while on vacation. “We love midcentury modern and more streamlined looks, but we also love traditional touches like polished brass and antiques,” Ryan says. “We wanted to play with the fact that the house is on a lake and to incorporate those cottage elements.”

The couple first focused their attention on the kitchen, which is visible from all the common rooms downstairs. “We have always wanted a black kitchen. Even though we love the look of white, light spaces, we also love rooms that are moody and cozy and have the opposite effect,” Ryan says.

They replaced upper cabinets with open shelving and faced both the range hood and peninsula base with vertical shiplap. “Adding those details and painting the shiplap black made it look more custom and modern,” Ryan says. Like the thrifted lamps he transforms, Ryan modified almost every surface inside the house and out with paint, right down to the furniture. A mix of matte and glossy sheens emphasizes the patina and timeworn textures, giving once-plain rooms instant history.

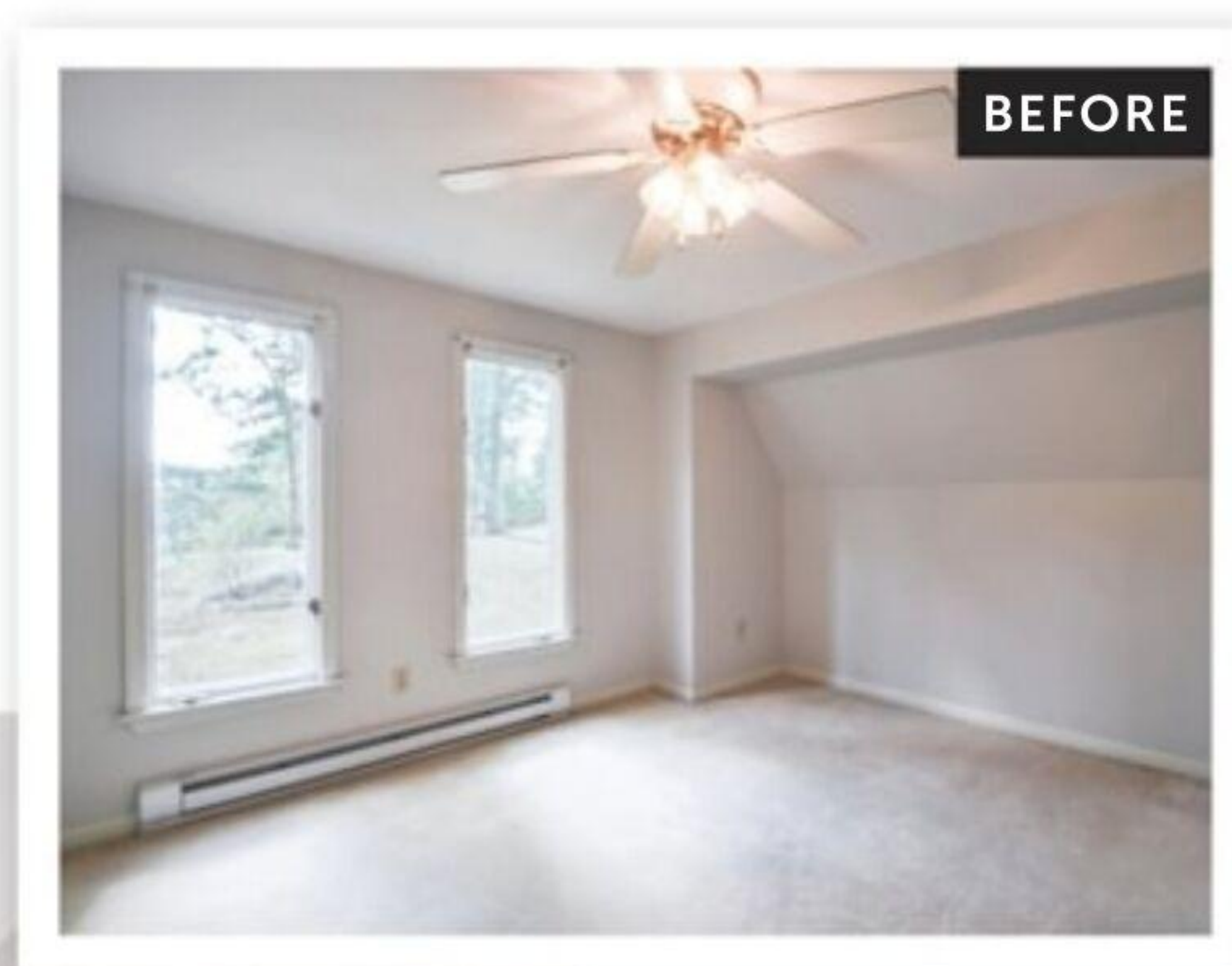
In the living room, the couple crafted a one-of-a-kind coffee table using a salvaged door (which Ryan scored near their former apartment dumpster long ago) for the top. Ryan gave it a lustrous finish with high-gloss spray paint to intensify the door’s weathered imperfections. “There are parts of the house that are new, but then they’re balanced with something I found at Goodwill or an antiques store,” he says. “It’s those things that make you want to look around. They make a neutral space interesting.”



KITCHEN A mix of metals and wood tones warms the small kitchen's clean lines and modern edges. Jeff (*on left*) and Ryan chose contrasting finishes—polished nickel hardware, antiqued brass sconces, gold faucets, and stainless-steel appliances—to help the space feel curated and visually interesting. A chunky white shelf replaced the upper cabinets to make the room look larger. A rail of pegs, which the couple made, is both stylish and functional. "We added that detail to give the kitchen more of a cottage story to tell," Ryan says.



PRIMARY BEDROOM An alcove wrapped in wood paneling acts as a headboard for the platform bed. Painting the paneling cream sets it off from the white walls but in a visually quiet way.



BIG VALUE, LOW COST

Think: Easy yet impactful. These budget-friendly home upgrades boost both style and appeal.



SNEAK IN STORAGE

It's one of the most coveted amenities and can make your home live so much larger. Install open shelving or a built-in bookshelf. Or bring in a few pieces of hardworking furniture, like a freestanding armoire or cabinet, storage ottomans and benches, or a portable kitchen island.



SWAP THE LIGHTING

Invest in one or two quality, eye-catching light fixtures to highlight main areas in your home. The dining room and kitchen (choose something to go over the sink or an island) are prime candidates.



CONSIDER WOODWORK

Architectural woodwork adds character and can help disguise imperfections in old walls. Painted shiplap, for example, is durable, budget-friendly, and can stand up to splashes, making it a popular choice for kitchens and bathrooms.

"OUR GO-TO IS OBVIOUSLY WHITE, BUT WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO MIX IN WOOD TONES AND DIFFERENT TEXTURES SO THINGS FEEL LAYERED AND NOT FLAT."

RYAN RABUSKA

GUEST BEDROOM A wood canopy bed and arched lattice mirror create a sense of architecture in the guest bedroom. Ryan transformed secondhand lamps by making handles out of craft clay and adhering them to the bases with superglue. "After I spray-painted them, I rubbed mud on them and wiped them clean so they would have an aged, antique look," he says.



■ **PATIO** The courtyard spans the length of the house, allowing for multiple conversation and dining zones. The 14-foot-long dining table, *opposite*, was made by a carpenter (Ryan found them on Facebook) who specializes in picnic tables. “It was really affordable because of the material, and we just stained and sealed it,” Ryan says. Strings of lights and a firepit evoke the feeling of a lakeside restaurant.



■ **DOCK** A short walk from the house, the private dock on Hitchcock Lake is outfitted as an outdoor room. Casual furniture, poufs, plants, and solar string lights make the dock an idyllic place to spend time.



■ **EXTERIOR** “As soon as we saw the house, we knew it was begging for a good coat of black paint to make it feel like a modern lake house,” says Ryan, who chose Behr Limousine Leather. “It was pretty controversial. Our neighbors asked, ‘Is it black?’ And we said, ‘Yes. Yes, it is!’”



5

bathroom REFRESHES

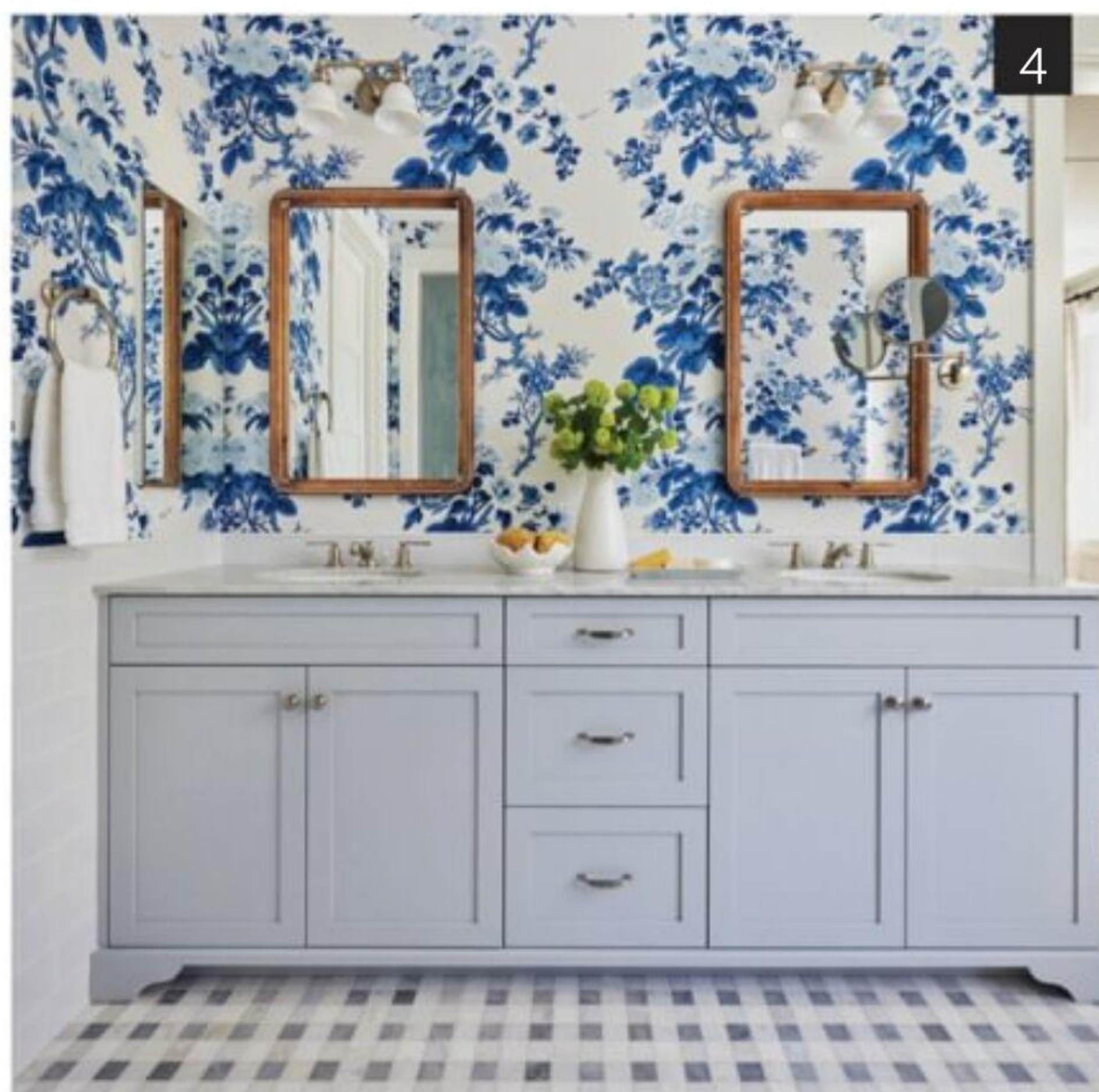
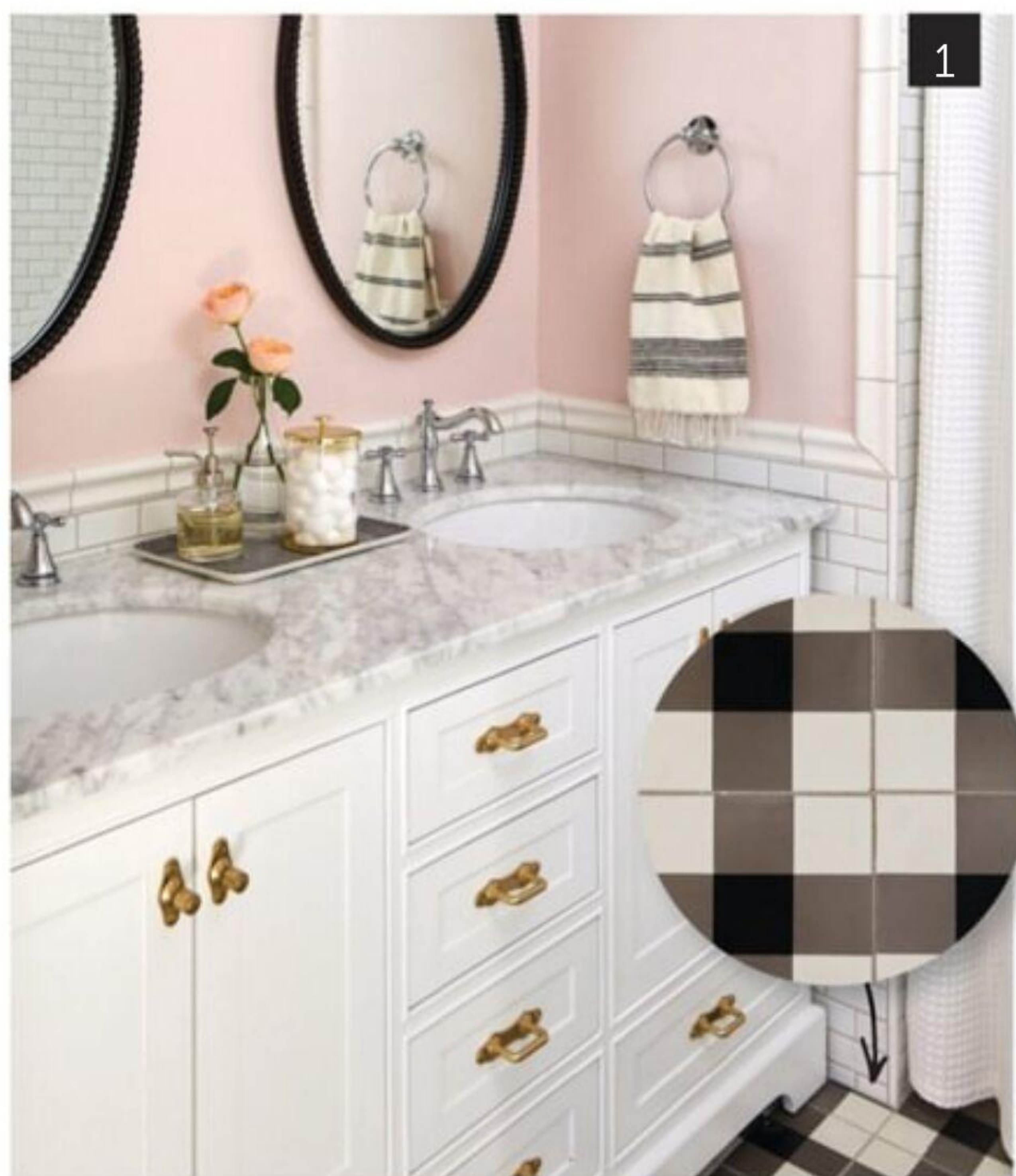
1. SIMPLE ADDS

A plain mirror gets a farmhouse fresh update in homeowner Kelly McJunkin's bathroom with a rustic frame made from 1x3-inch boards and decorative L brackets. A painted stencil pattern adds color to the existing floor tile.



WELCOME TRANQUILITY IN YOUR GET-READY ROOM WITH SUBTLE—YET BOLD—POPS OF PATTERN AND COLOR.

WRITER **EMILY CARREON**



2. PRETTY IN PINK Bloggers Chris and Julia Markum wanted their daughters' bathroom to stand out. Introducing: Plaid floor tiles, pink walls (Calamine from Farrow & Ball), and floor-to-ceiling shower tiles. A mix of metals adds a collected-over-time feel to the space. **3. STAR POWER** Using a Cricut machine, blogger Angela Rose printed a star-shaped stencil and then painted the motif in the corner and center of each floor tile. **4. CLEAN SPACE** Natural light, white tile throughout, and light-wash wood accents yield a spa-like feel in homeowners Anita and Travis Yokota's bathroom. **5. MIXED MOTIFS** Honed marble floor tile laid in a classic buffalo check pattern creates a graphic contrast to the whimsical floral wallpaper in a primary bath designed by James Dolenc and Tom Riker.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE AND BOTTOM LEFT) EDMUND BARR, (TOP LEFT) ADAM ALBRIGHT, (TOP RIGHT) JAY WILDE, (BOTTOM RIGHT) WERNER STRAUBE



BEFORE

UPDATE THE PAST

When it comes to future-proofing the renovation of an old house to ensure it won't feel outdated in the years to come, consider Lacey Soslow's philosophy: "Honor what is there but make living comfortable." In her historical Philadelphia home, she kept the original floor plan and repaired salvageable elements to preserve period details. Modern appliances add convenience.

original GLORY

Once split into three units, this 100+ year old home is brought back to life by a seasoned renovator who merged modern design with elements of its past.

WRITER **LAURA FENTON** PHOTOGRAPHER **DAVID LAND** STYLIST **EDDIE ROSS**



The renovating bug crept up on Lacey Soslow gradually. It started with fixing up the first house she owned. Then she found herself frustrated with the remodels she saw happening around her in her hometown of Philadelphia. “Developers were coming in and totally gutting old houses. They weren’t saving any of the original details,” she says. Lacey, who was the e-commerce director at garden and home retailer Terrain at the time, and her mother, Audrey, a real estate broker, decided to buy a small two-bedroom house to restore and sell. “We thought, ‘Hey, let’s try and do this differently.’” They sold their first flip successfully and moved on to another project and then another.

Before she knew it, Lacey had amassed a Rolodex full of contractors, plumbers, and electricians and had learned the nuances of HVAC systems. So when she and her wife, Michelle Landry, discovered a house for sale on one of their favorite blocks in Philadelphia, Lacey didn’t hesitate to make an offer. “If you looked at the before photos, it looked so intimidating,” she says of the house, whose age is uncertain (it’s listed as 1925, but Lacey suspects it may date to the 1890s). “But from the projects I had done with my mom over the years, it was clear to me that much of the house was actually in great shape,” she says.

The single-family home had been chopped up into three mini apartments, each with its own kitchen, but the original plasterwork hadn’t been damaged in the conversion. The floors and staircase were covered in thick 1970s carpeting, but the hardwood remained preserved beneath. The couple were also charmed by the front porch, the rooms with grand proportions, and windows on three sides—rare qualities in their South Philly neighborhood. Lacey set out to bring the old house into the 21st century while redesigning it in a way that would stand the test of time. She actually decided to make the

LIVING ROOM The original fireplace was apparently sealed by previous owners, but its elaborately painted faux-marble mantel and surround are a distinctive feature Lacey, *above*, decided to keep as a focal point. It was cracked, so “the builder reset it to get it as straight as possible,” she says. Lacey had the plaster on the walls restored in a subtle blush hue, then balanced the home’s historical bones with furnishings and accessories from modern eras. Even though she converted the house to forced-air heat, she left the original cast-iron radiators for the authentic look they lend.

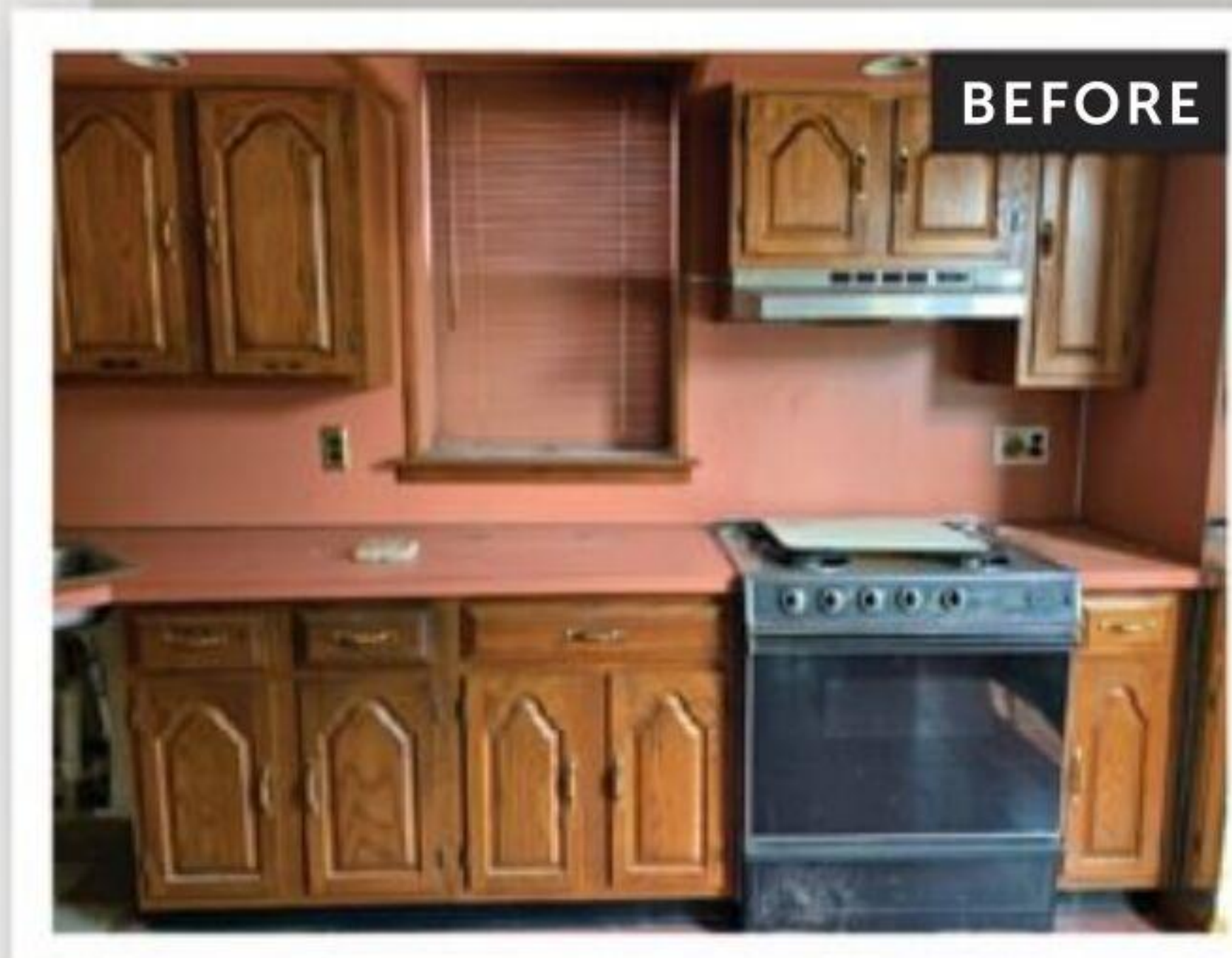


KITCHEN The simple Shaker-style cabinet doors aren't original but pay homage to the home's turn-of-the-century character. Original columns and moldings are almost impossible to re-create, so Lacey had them repaired to maintain their of-another-era flair.





KITCHEN "It may sound silly, but not seeing a microwave instantly makes a kitchen more timeless," says Lacey, who had outlets installed in the pantry for modern conveniences. The Hallman stove has the look she craved at a fraction of the price of imported French models.



DONATE YOUR LEFTOVERS

Consider donating old kitchen cabinets, appliances, and bath fixtures you aren't reusing. The Good Future Design Alliance (thegfda.com) partners with companies such as Renovation Angel that will remove items in resellable condition. "The cost is comparable to your contractor ripping them out, but it's often a tax write-off," says GFDA founder Kate Story. Bonus: They don't wind up in a landfill.



DINING ROOM It might seem unthinkable to give up square footage by removing an addition, but not every "improvement" is worth keeping. The ground floor of Lacey's house felt dark and gloomy because an addition off this back wall blocked the sun. To maximize daylight, she demolished the extra room and specified large glass doors for access to the backyard. The new custom doors required some negotiating between her vision, the architect's opinion of what was possible, and a reality check from the builder on logistics and cost. "The architect was like you can go bigger because the ceilings are so high, but bigger openings also mean more structural challenges, and that will add more expense," Lacey says. "So it was a learning journey." Black trim on the new doors and windows echoes the finishes on the kitchen faucet, pendants, and hardware.

house smaller by removing a kitchen that had been added to the back. This move gained much-desired space outdoors and tons of daylight indoors. Out front, Lacey replaced the brick portico with one that felt period-appropriate. Inside, preserving the plaster and the original floor plan dictated many of her design decisions. For example, the new kitchen layout was planned around decorative columns.

To keep the budget under control, Lacey made an inventory of what was in good enough shape to keep: The relatively new boiler did not need replacing, and sanding and sealing the existing oak floors brought them back to life.

Turns out, this wasn't just another resale project; it was more personal. "I don't know where we'll be in 10 or 20 years, but the intention was that this was where we wanted to be for a long time," Lacey says. That doesn't mean she's leaving the world of home improvement anytime soon. During this renovation, she was thinking back on her many years of remodeling and how she intentionally sought female pros. She wondered aloud, "Could you create a way for all the women electricians, plumbers, and contractors to connect with each other and do-it-yourselfers like me?" Her answer: Matriarchy Build, a digital platform that links female and LGBTQ+ tradespeople with homeowners for telehealth-style renovation help. "There's such a divide between skilled trades and DIY," she says of the launch. "I'm hoping we can create a marriage between those two spaces."





EXTERIOR Lacey and Michelle fell in love with the house for its front porch, a rarity in their neighborhood, but the original architecture had been replaced by brick. The couple hired an architect to re-create a more period-appropriate structure, pulling inspiration from nearby homes. "I wanted it to feel more open and airy and to feel consistent," says Lacey.



PLASTER KNOW-HOW

Lacey not only saved the original plaster moldings, but also hired plaster artist Luren Jenison of XoXo (helloxoxo.com) to apply subtle texture to the living room walls, *left*, which adds visual depth and looks original to the house. Although Lacey hired a pro, plaster can be a DIY project, especially if you aren't aiming for a smooth finish. You can find plaster in a range of colors at vasariplaster.com. Lime wash, a special paint that is premixed with limestone, is an easy-to-apply alternative that gives walls a chalky effect. Find it at portolapaints.com.

BATHROOM It makes sense to modernize bathrooms, but that doesn't mean you have to throw out the original aesthetics with the bathwater. Lacey chose the new white oak vanity, marble countertop, and tub for their chameleon-like ability to blend old and new. "The vanity felt as if it could fit into something more modern but also have a little old-school farmhouse energy," she says. The new freestanding tub boasts a matte black finish in a slightly updated silhouette compared to a typical vintage model. Lacey worked with friends and former colleagues at Terrain to source plants for the indoor and outdoor spaces—the larger and more sculptural the better, like this ficus triangularis and Australian tree fern.



OPEN-DOOR POLICY! FOR THE GARAGE-TURNED-PARTY-ROOM, LACEY RETAINED THE OVERHEAD DOOR SO SHE CAN CLOSE IT DURING BAD WEATHER.



RENO RULES

“No matter how experienced you are, things are always going to take longer than you expect, and there will be surprises,” cautions Lacey Soslow, who has renovated multiple homes. She shares her advice for working on an older house.

EXPECT TO MAKE MAJOR UPDATES

“Always do a full-blown inspection before committing,” Lacey says. With an older, unrenovated home, you should anticipate that you’ll need to completely replace plumbing and electrical wiring, as she did.

ASK FOR SUGGESTIONS

The best way to find a good contractor? Word of mouth from friends. It’s critical to see examples of their work and ask for references.

DO IT ALL NOW

Include as much work as possible in your initial renovation. “It’s in your best interest financially,” Lacey says. “There are so many economies of scale.”

GET THREE ESTIMATES

“Not just because you can compare costs, but you also get a lot of information through the process,” says Lacey, who walks the house room by room with each contractor. “It’s helpful to get different feedback.”

EMBRACE THE LAYOUT

It can be a cost savings to keep walls and new plumbing in the same place as old, especially on upper floors.



OUTDOOR SPACE To tie the whole area together, Lacey hardscaped the patio and former garage, *opposite*, with slate pavers, making the spaces feel more like rooms. They painted the privacy fence and garage door black and coordinated the look by using black masonry paint on the interior of the dining area (the dark color also hides some of that space's imperfections).

5

laundry UPGRADES

1. ONE STOP SPOT

This closet-size laundry room makes the most of vertical space by integrating all the must-haves into a tight 6-foot zone—a washer and dryer, folding counter, hanging rod, and multiple storage shelves.



GET THE MOST OUT OF A SMALL UTILITY AREA WITH CLEVER STORAGE SOLUTIONS, FUNCTIONAL REPURPOSED MATERIALS, AND A DASH OF PERSONAL STYLE.

WRITER EMILY CARREON



2. UPCYCLED REFRESH For a budget-friendly way to add more storage to a basement laundry room, stylist Jeni Wright sourced cabinets from a friend (who was renovating their kitchen) and a local Habitat for Humanity ReStore. A fresh coat of paint—white on top, blue on the bottom—united the mismatched sets. **3. CUSTOM BUILT** To sort laundry more easily and save floor space, homeowner Thalita Murray built deep cubbies on the side of her washer and dryer to hold baskets. **4. WORK SURFACE** DIYers Courtney and Nate Equall installed a wood topper to sit on their washer and dryer, creating a designated drop zone and a smooth surface to fold laundry. **5. DRYING HACK** To take advantage of every inch in her tight laundry room, *Better Homes & Gardens* home editor Monika Biegler Evers installed a fixed shower rod above the sink to hang-dry delicate items.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE) MARTY BALDWIN, (TOP LEFT) JACOB FOX, (TOP RIGHT) THALITA MURRAY, (BOTTOM LEFT) ADAM ALBRIGHT, (BOTTOM RIGHT) LAURA MOSS

warm WELCOME

BACKYARD Homeowners Pippa Laundry, *center*, Candace Griffin, *right*, and their daughter Quincy—along with goldendoodle Dilla—enjoy spending time in their Chicago-area backyard. The couple hired a landscape architect to draw up plans for the neglected space, including the low deck that snugs up cozily to the garage wall.

A photograph of a modern outdoor patio. In the foreground, a black metal fireplace with a white interior is lit with a fire. To its right are two white cushioned chairs with black frames. A black and white striped blanket is draped over one of the chairs. A small, fluffy, light brown dog is lying on the wooden deck in the lower right. The background is a wooden wall with a white-framed window and string lights hanging above. A large potted plant is on the right.

An interior designer
pushed her own
creative boundaries
with bold color,
custom built-ins,
and a reinspired
perspective to bring
her family's
'90s home into the
next century.

WRITER **JOANNA LINDBERG**
PHOTOGRAPHER **ADAM ALBRIGHT**



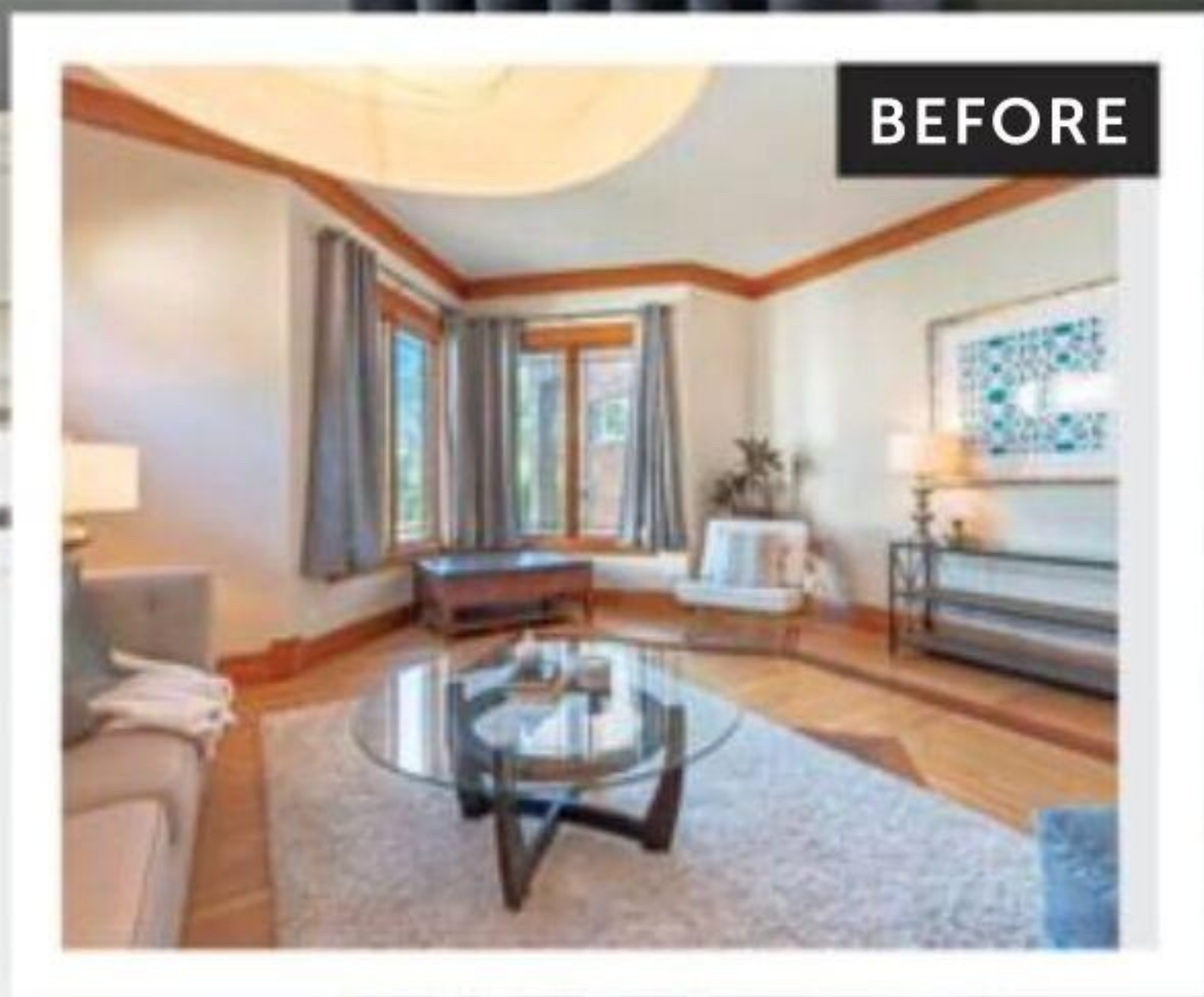
OUTDOOR SPACE Candace and Pippa use the stairs coming down from the den as stadium-style seating when they invite a crowd over. The terraced effect makes smart use of their relatively narrow lot. Potted plants add color.

Candace Griffin stands in her living room, thumbing through her vinyl collection. She flips past Beyoncé, Dave Matthews, and Fleetwood Mac on her way to Chaka Khan. Slipping the record from its sleeve, she says, “I like to go to a thrift store and pick up something I’ve never heard before but that looks like it would speak to me. I like the beauty of mixing old and new.”

There’s a slight pause. “OK, I’m not trying to make that connection,” says the owner of Candace Mary Interiors, “but that’s exactly how I design too.” The proof points are all around—ashy blue paint, vintage photography, contemporary throw pillows, colorful wooden toddler toys. Candace’s style is as broad and pitch-perfect as her playlist.

When she and her wife, Pippa Laundy, first toured this late ’90s row house in Evanston, Illinois, Candace felt a tug on her heart. Other potential buyers had bolted upon seeing the sunken rooms, the interior doors set with quirky stained glass, and the yards of varnished oak trim. But Candace was unruffled. “I walked in and immediately thought, OK, we can work with this!” she recalls. The couple loved the block, the proximity to the lake and Chicago, the abundance of windows and skylights, and that—like them—the house wasn’t cookie-cutter. “It was a builder’s own home, so I knew this was all quality,” she says. “We just needed to freshen it up.”

Right away, Candace made the sometimes-controversial choice to paint over the trim. “It needed to happen to take some years off of it,” she says. But she adds, “I’m a sucker for wood details.” So she included her own, spinning the style more cosmopolitan. The living room received built-ins with inset cabinet doors. A DIY slatted wall adds texture in the dining room. And a new full bar—Pippa is a big cocktail-maker—combines IKEA cabinetry with



LIVING ROOM When the couple moved into their home, the large living room begged for built-ins. "But I wanted it to look like art," Candace says. She designed a roomy unit with a slatted panel framing the TV, a matching white-washed red oak countertop, and high-end picture lighting and hardware.



KITCHEN New cabinet panels are painted a muted green (Benjamin Moore Spanish Olive), but to save money, Candace kept the granite countertops and has no regrets. “They’re playing nicely with the bar area and giving a little terrazzo,” she laughs. “It works!”

smart dress-ups. “I was thinking about making this home true and authentic to who we are,” Candace says. “Not stuffy but approachable, like you can take your shoes off and kick your feet up on the couch.”

The definition of being true and authentic changed with the birth of the couple’s daughter, Quincy. A chic nursery was a given, but in the home’s central living hub—a dining room and a galley kitchen overlooking a sunken den—Candace thought ahead a few years to life with a young child. An alcove at the back of the kitchen became a breakfast nook where Candace takes work calls and Quincy will one day do homework. She also tore down upper cabinets over the sink that interrupted her view down into the den. “I can be cooking in the kitchen and watching TV, Q can hang in that room with her toys, and Pippa could be at the dining room table,” she explains.

With the function of the family spaces on lock, Candace turned to color in the living room down the hall. “As someone who gravitates toward neutrals, I was trying to challenge myself,” she says, by going for a lounge vibe. She thought about interiors she’d admired over the years (like Detroit’s Shinola Hotel), and grabbed color courage from those memories. After sampling more than 20 shades of blue, she settled on a dusty hue that’s a whole mood.

The coda to the renovation has been installing art. “Art is something I’ve come to more recently,” Candace says. “Like music, it makes you feel something.” Every piece ties to Candace and Pippa’s history or passions, including a work by Pippa’s grandfather and photos of Bay Area protests the couple took part in. Candace points to a print by West African photographer Malick Sidibé of a man and woman, heads together, her feet bare, dancing. “It’s always been a favorite of mine. It’s nothing too fancy, but you can see the joy,” Candace says. “I knew that piece needed to go here because that’s how we want to feel.”



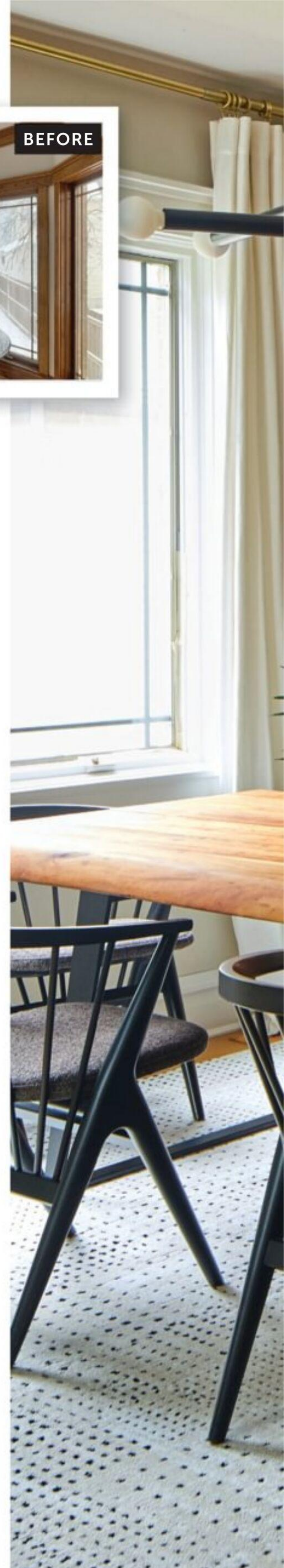
DINING ROOM BAR Candace trimmed out a wall of black IKEA cabinetry, then painted the adjacent wall Sherwin-Williams Tricorn Black to match. The stone countertop was also an IKEA find, glammed up with an antiqued mirror backsplash and brass sink and faucet. "We needed to mix high and low to work with our budget," she says.





NURSERY Soft pink board-and-batten walls, black rainbow decals, a little bit of vintage—Quincy’s room came together almost too easily. Craving bold, Candace painted the ceiling maroon (Sherwin-Williams Sommelier). “It so paid off,” she says, “and let us lean into the funkiness.”

LIVING ROOM “I always tell clients that each room is like a puzzle,” Candace says. She pieced together blues, cloaking the space in Sherwin-Williams Scattered Showers—a not-too-dark hue she compares to a warm hug—then adding rich sapphire and topaz upholstery.





DINING ROOM Hunting for inexpensive drama, Candace installed a slatted wall using trim from The Home Depot. She split the work with a handyman she hired on Thumbtack. He cut the pieces to length and hung them; she sanded, filled, and painted (Sherwin-Williams Shiitake). "The texture behind that bold piece of art is the perfect way to highlight it," she says.

5 *backyard* MAKEOVERS

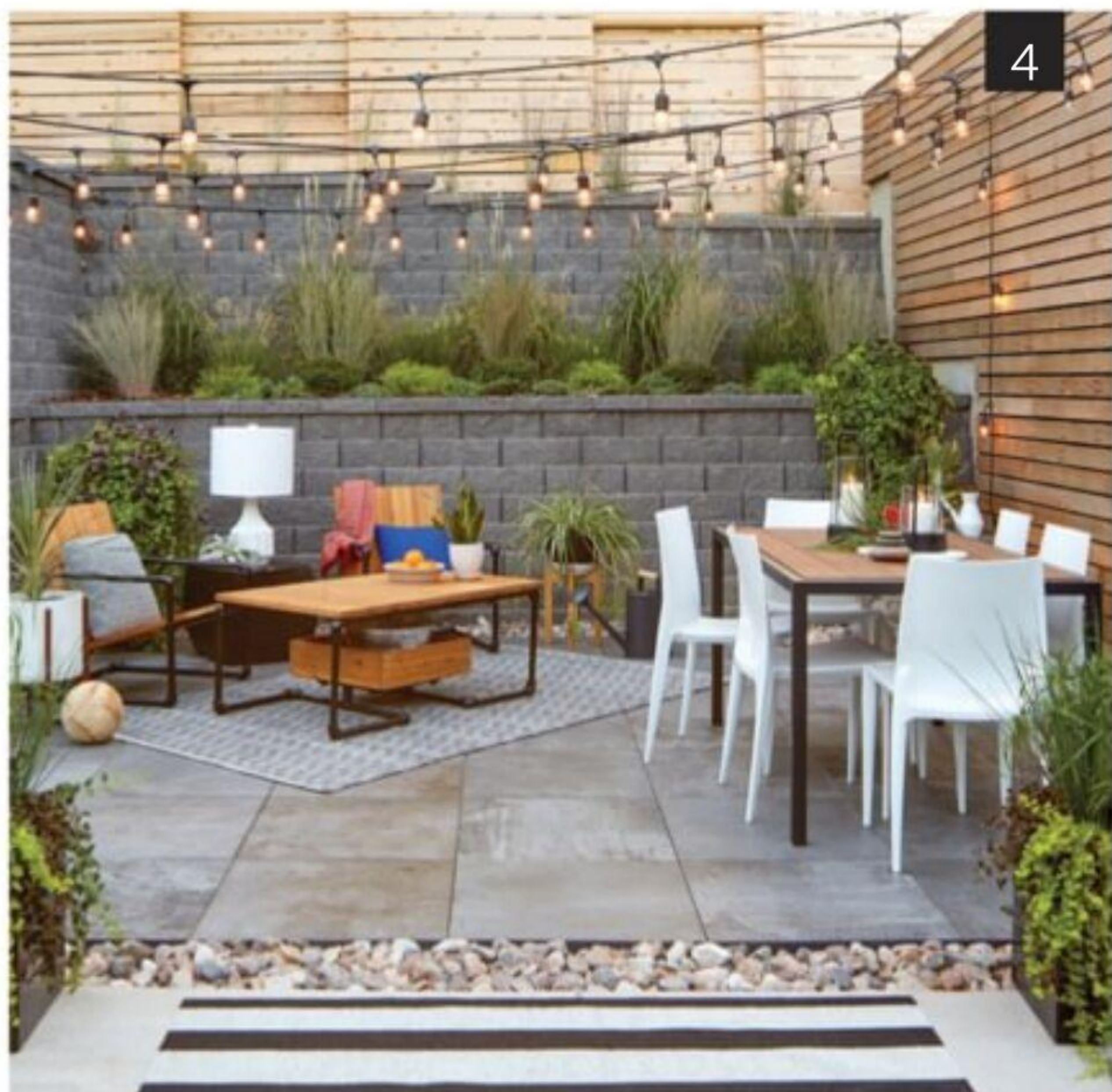


1. GROUND COVER

A medallion stencil, white concrete paint, and layers of sealer gave homeowners Jenna and Matt Leblanc's concrete patio an elevated look.

EXTEND YOUR LIVING SPACE OUTDOORS WITH SPOTS MADE TO DINE, RELAX, AND ENTERTAIN—OR A LITTLE BIT OF ALL THREE.

WRITER **EMILY CARREON**



2. FIRESIDE NIGHTS At the center of her backyard, interior designer Rosa Beltran-Francis worked with a pro to run a gas line to an 8-foot firepit. Soft seating accompanies the area for laid-back evenings. **3. THRIFTED FIND** Homeowner Kate Keesee created privacy for her outdoor space with a wall constructed from vintage fruit-drying racks. **4. SECTIONED PERFECTION** An outdoor rug offsets the seating zone from the dining area; string lights overhead complete the living room-like effect. **5. THROW SHADE** A louvered pergola helps block the sun on this backyard deck, which homeowners Jessica and Kirk Eno painted white to blend into their home's siding. The DIY plank wall made from cedar 1x4s defines the seating area.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE) HECTOR SANCHEZ, (TOP LEFT) DAVID TSAY, (TOP RIGHT) EDMUND BARR, (BOTTOM LEFT) ADAM ALBRIGHT, (BOTTOM RIGHT) JASON DONNELLY

WHY WE DIY

(and What Holds Us Back)

Do you DIY for the endorphin boost you get from a job well done? Or to bring a project in under budget? Have you ever started something then abandoned it? Yes, yes, and yes. To understand what motivates our readers, we commissioned the first-ever BHG DIY Trend Report to study your experiences. Here are the key things we learned.



86%
OF YOU FEEL
CONFIDENT
USING POWER
TOOLS, WHILE
36% ABSOLUTELY
LOVE THEM!

77%
CURRENTLY
HAVE 1+
ABANDONED
PROJECTS

76%
LIKE TO SEE
DETAILED DIY
CONTENT TO
FEEL "IN THE
KNOW"—EVEN
WHEN HIRING
A PRO

94%
ENJOY LOW-
RISK TASKS



IN A STUCK PLACE

We discovered two hurdles for our DIYers. **FOMU**, a “fear of messing up,” has driven 68 percent of potential DIYers to hire a pro. Do you worry you’ll get it wrong or make a costly (or dangerous) mistake? You’re not alone.

MPRS, or “mid-project regret syndrome,” is experienced by 86 percent of DIYers. It’s that feeling of losing momentum when you’re in the middle of a project. Maybe it’s the extra trips to the store, mistakes, or unexpected costs associated with errors. Negative feelings like stress, exhaustion, and boredom also contribute to MPRS. For many people, it’s just too much, causing them to abandon their projects entirely. **But you don’t have to stay stuck.** It turns out the secret to overcoming both FOMU and MPRS comes down to having the right knowledge before starting a project and giving yourself permission to make mistakes. By anticipating what you’ll need and potential pitfalls, you’ll get closer to your finish line.

The BHG DIYer has an emotional connection to projects and sees them as part of their identity. Our readers are doers who want to express creativity, solve problems, and manage projects. Completing tasks makes people feel proud, accomplished, and happy.



Updating the backyard and garden tops the list of projects our DIYers want to tackle. And 88% want to learn more about gardening.

DIY PROJECTS YOU FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT DOING

- 81% Making holiday decor
- 75% Creating wall art
- 74% Sewing a throw pillow
- 66% Replacing doorknobs
- 54% Repurposing furniture

TASKS YOU'D GLADLY HIRE OUT

- 83% Electrical rewiring
- 72% Replacing windows
- 63% Renovating a room
- 54% Laying new flooring
- 51% Re-tiling a bathroom

WHAT'S YOUR WHY?



FEELING A
SENSE OF
PRIDE



SOME JOBS
ARE EASY
ENOUGH



SAVING
MONEY

FRESH IS ON THE HORIZON

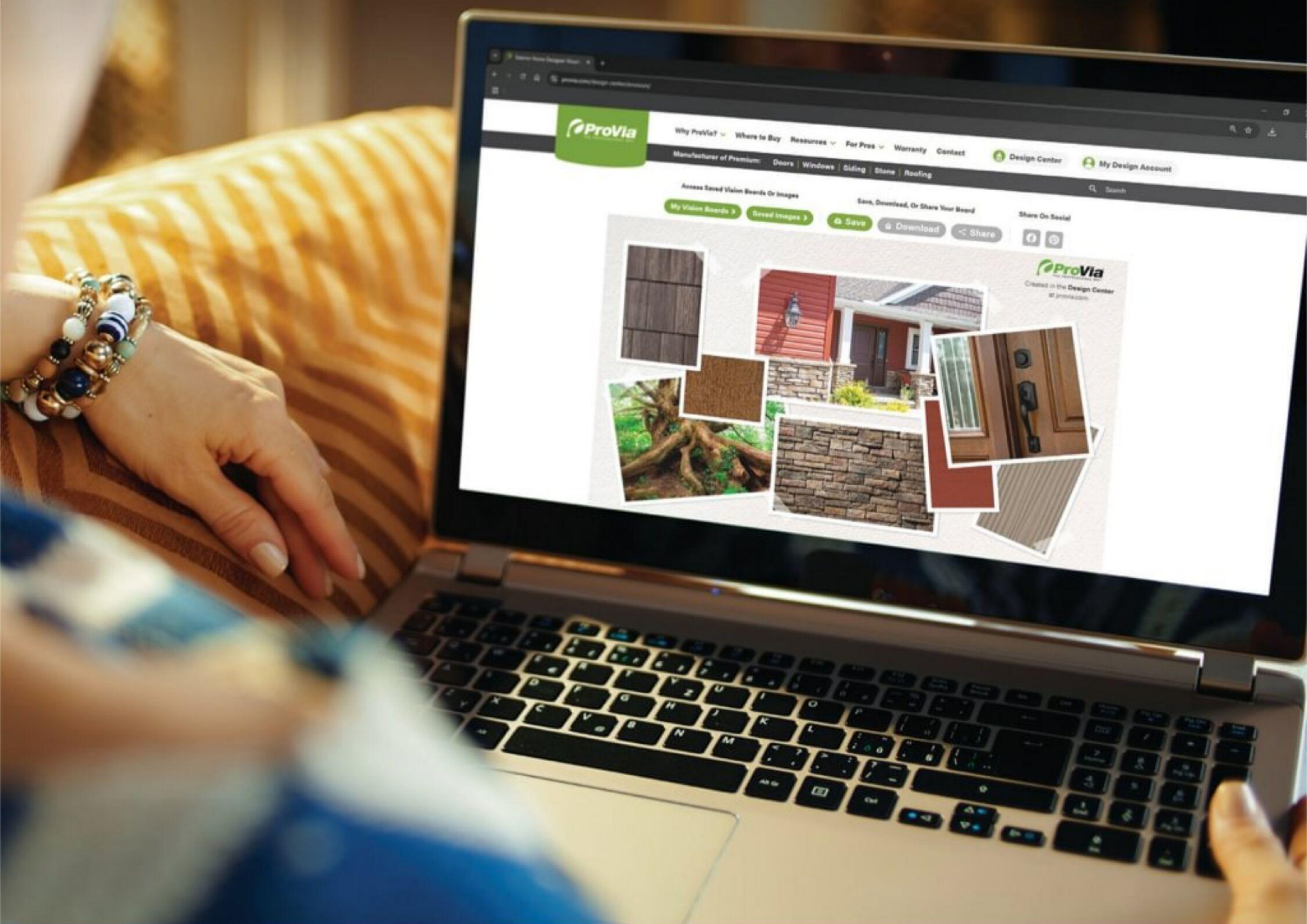


Take a breath then take it all in exploring sandy shores and colorful coasts.
Simply step outside, shine bright and keep it fresh in Pure Michigan.

PURE *M*ICHIGAN®
michigan.org

IMAGINE. ENVISION.

Create your perfect home exterior design.



Visit the ProVia Design Center and bring your home exterior vision to life. With your free MyDesign account you can collect color palettes, save product images and create a Vision Board. Upload your home photo to the Visualizer and experiment with a limitless number of styles and colors for doors, windows, siding, stone and roofing products to design your dream home exterior. With the ProVia Design Center, you can create the perfect curb appeal for your home.



DOORS | WINDOWS
SIDING | STONE | ROOFING

**Start
Designing**

